

**PRACTICAL  
REFLECTIONS ON THE FIGURATIVE  
ART OF SINGING**

**BY  
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## **GIAMBATTISTA MANCINI,**

singing master at the Imperial Court of Vienna, studied the art of singing under Antonio Bernacchi of Bologna and Leonardo Leo of Naples.

Born in Ascoli Piceno (Italy) in the year MDCCXVI and died in Vienna in the year MDCCC.

Third edition reviewed, corrected and augmented by the author was published in Milan (Italy) in the year MDCCLXXVII, by Giuseppe Galeazzi, Printer of the Royal House.

This work has been translated into the French language by two different writers; one edition was published in the year MDCCLXXVI under the title "L'art du chant figure" and another edition was printed also in Paris in the year MDCCLXXXVI under the title of

"Reflexions pratiques sur le chant figure."

## TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

The serene Mary Elizabeth, Archduchess of Austria,  
Princess of Hungary, Boheme, etc., etc.

*Giambattista Mancini*

Among the many gifts and virtues which so luminously adorn the heart of your Royal Highness, the art of music occupies no little part of your thoughts and time. It is for this reason that I dedicate these thoughts to you, which are a collection formed from experience and meditations, and which I consider to have been of most use in my profession.

This book has been published with the authority of your great name. To no greater honor and glory could I aspire. However, in reviewing my work, I found reasons for modification and enlargement. I trust, Serene Princess, that you will be indulgent and read this edition.

Permit me again to present and dedicate to you this public humble tribute of respect, gratitude and veneration.

## **TO COMMANDER ALESSANDRO BONCI,**

### **Illustrious Master of the Art of Singing:**

My love and devotion to art, led me to devote five years of thorough search throughout the libraries of Europe, before I found this precious manuscript. I have spent the greater part of the last two years in translating it into the English language, assisted by my most devoted pupil, Miss Lucy La-Costa Godsey.

I feel that this is one of the most important works ever written concerning the art of singing. It comes to prove to us that the art of the great Italian masters has not disappeared, for this book was written by the Dean of these great masters, when the golden era of song was in its full glory in Italy.

There is a tendency today among the English speaking people, and even to some extent in our beloved Italy, to teach voice culture by scientific and mechanical methods, and as a result our old traditions have been nearly destroyed. I have unbounded faith that the publication of this classic will be of vast importance in restoring the old and only correct method of the art of training voices, and singing.

To you, the only living exponent of the art that made Italy famous during the XVI and XVII centuries, I dedicate this endeavor for three reasons:

First, you and your sublime art completely corroborate the rules and precepts set forth in this book.

Secondly, for the interest you are showing the English speaking people in helping them solve the problem of combining the art of "Bel Canto" with their language.

Thirdly, under the patronage of so excellent a musical authority as you, I may have the assurance that my feeble efforts will meet with indulgence.

PIETRO BUZZI,

*Lyric Tenor-Director of the Verdi School of Singing,  
Los Angeles, California.*

*Signor Pietro Buzzi, Singing Master and Director  
of the Verdi School, Los Angeles, California:*

**MY DEAR PROFESSOR:**—I have just finished reading your splendid translation of Giambattista Mancini's "Osservazioni pratiche sul canto figurato" and must congratulate you upon your success. The odd style of the ancient writers is difficult to translate into modern English. While you have made a literal translation, you have also made it very plain and easy to understand.

Undoubtedly, this book will prove a great enlightenment to the whole musical profession and more particularly to this young and wonderful nation in which at the present time there is such a widespread movement in favor of the liberal arts, especially of music and song.

This work appears at a propitious moment, as not one of the many new methods has proved as good or successful as the old Italian method. If the modern scientific discoveries would blend themselves with the old Italian method, using the latter as a foundation, then the art of song would again be raised to its former high standard.

I strongly recommend your work to the English speaking people, as it will show them how to broaden the vowels without sacrificing the consonants, and also how to control the syllables at the front of the mouth without tightening the "Faucis," an act that invariably mars the purity of tone. Even in our Italian Language, which is so liquid and pure, the vowels are often emphasized in order to insure the tone at its right place and pitch, thus making it round and sonorous throughout, in soft as well as in loud passages.

Wishing you the success to which your earnest endeavor entitles you, I accept your kind dedication and endorse the book most heartily.

ALESSANDRO BONCI.



## PREFACE

**A**CCIDENTALLY, now and then utility has given life to the arts, which have disappeared with the disappearance of their usefulness. These arts have been ruined and buried by the succession of centuries. Some of them have not grown beyond a mediocrity, in which state they were born; especially this is true of those in China. Many of them have been at different times more or less cultivated, according to their utility and the degree of interest taken in them by nations and individuals. On the other hand many other arts have gradually been brought to perfection. The larger part of the arts, however, that have had their birth in a favored and beneficial climate, have had with hardly any exception their prosperous life from Africa to Europe, from Egypt to Greece, and were brought from Athens to Rome. But the northern people's desire for pillage and devastation broke and destroyed the Roman dominions, and laid the veil of ignorance over the Constantine Empire, burying in their barbarism the arts, their founders and supporters. They annihilated the stores of

knowledge and attainments, and many original products of the talents and industries of our great ancestors.

When the liberal arts were recalled to a new life, after such a disastrous epoch and centuries of oblivion it was still necessary to recover and assemble the few fragments left intact from the rascality of man, and to imitate these remains.

Through the imitation of perfect models, one can acquire great knowledge and culture. (Although as Marmontel says in his article "Critique," one may misconstrue the word imitation by carrying it to such an extreme that one becomes a slave to models, and thus destroys his own creative ability.) Thus a painter in his examinations gives his pupils some work of Raphael to copy.

But not every art has perfect models for the students to copy and observe. Singing is one of those arts which lives more by the transmission of its precepts than by examples or illustration.

Precept and theory ought to have been in all times and ages the element and inspiration of every science and every art. But as man comes from the hands of nature absolutely ignorant, it is only through intuition, observation and experience that he is able to deduce and solve them. We conclude then that experience is the wisest teacher of all the arts. In music it is especially true; and those who are the most experienced and practiced in it, must beyond a doubt, possess the most knowledge. I do

not flatter myself to such a point, but I only wish for the benefit of the whole profession, to give these suggestions and visions of wisdom which I have acquired in my many years devoted to this art.

I published in Vienna in 1774, some of my thoughts and reflections upon vocal music, for the benefit not only of the teachers, but also for those who study. My efforts have been accepted indulgently, not only in Italy and Germany, but also in France, where they have been translated into that language in the past year 1776 by Mr. De-Fougiers, and a little later in the month of March they were mentioned in the book "Literary Story" by the Rev. Abbot Rozier, page 261. But as I found I had omitted some things which I deem useful, I started again, out of pure pastime, to write them out and to these I have added many other reflections.

The requests of friends, and the authority of professors, have urged me to reproduce the above mentioned reflections and make them more perfect and also enrich them as I have done. I could verify this statement by publishing the gracious letters received from Father Maestro Martini, Giovanni Haffe, alias Saffone, Gaetano Latilla, Nicolo Piccini, Giovanni Amadeo Naumann, and other famous professors of our art. If these letters were not so full of undeserved compliments and praise, I would publish them, but modesty forbids.

Influenced by such authorities and the desire to contribute to the good of the profession, I have not

hesitated to put my limited ability to the severest torture, in order to reform, refine and perfect this small treatise of mine. I trust that the profession will look with a kind eye upon this work, which I have done for the advantage of students; and I also trust that the youths will profit by this work of mine, that they will discover in it, instruction and food, and that they will raise their ambitions, through the nobility of the art and find inspiration to fix their steps well in the path of perfection and honor.

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# THE ART OF SINGING

## CHAPTER I

### THE EXCELLENCE AND STERLING WORTH OF MUSIC

**A**MONG all the remedies which humanity has invented to fortify itself against indolence and idleness, and among all the objects that hold our imagination and sentiments, there is no doubt but that music is the most jocund and perfect. It is capable of making us forget the pains of life, thus relieving us. It makes us conscious of delicate feelings and it provokes in us more exquisite sentiments, disclosing to us a better existence by giving us pleasure and recreation.

It is commonly believed that music takes its derivation from "Musa" defined as: "Art of combining sounds in a way pleasing to the ear." Music is considered the most charming and beautiful of all the liberal arts. And if you investigate the principles of its combinations, the cause and effects which it awakens in us, you will readily see that it can be called a science, as well as an art. The value and excellence of an art can reasonably be determined by three things,—its birth, the number of people who learned it and the advantages derived.

The origin of music is very ancient. Song is the most despotic of all and the one which has the greatest power over the human heart, and is also that branch of music which follows most closely its original—Nature. It is certainly contemporary with the world. I will not presume to trace the famous inventor, because it would be boldness and idle since so many learned men have written about it, especially the immortal Father Master Giambettista Martini, convential minor, still living in Bologna. He is a clear minded man, and a light and example of our profession. Indeed as an historian, and in consideration of his works, he rightly deserves to be called the honor of his century and of his order.

Let it be as we read in the Old Testament, that in the first days of the world, Jubal was the first inventor, while Diodoro asserts that the Egyptians resurrected it after the Deluvian period, and Polibio affirms that the Arcadians were the inventors while Plinio attributes it to Anfione, Dionisio and others give the credit to the Grecians. To me this proof is enough, that music is the most ancient art. And I could say with Lucrezio with all surety, that this art was born with the first men; that from the sweet, natural concerts of the birds, they learned to modulate their own voices. For, who is there in the world who does not know more or less how to sing? There is song wherever there is speech. Even the savages who live in the forests like wild beasts, have their own songs. Some of them have been published by

Rousseau in the last table of his Musical Dictionary. It is the custom of the savages to tell their bravery and acts of war, to the congress of their tribes, by singing them in order to add to them more honor and dignity. This art then, claims and flatters itself with the vale of antiquity, the honor of being popular with and accepted by every nation; and it is consequently cultivated by all orders of persons. The sacred and secular histories stand and speak with luminous examples to prove the veracity of my statement.

Lo! How many great and saintly men, versed and involved deeply in the study of military life, politics, philosophy and theology, were attracted by the suavity and sweetness of song, and stole many hours from their grave occupations to study this art! They conquered it, not as a profession but for fancy and delight. They adorned themselves with science and the lyre, as well as with the toga and sword, and thus honored art also. David sung his songs with the harp; Jeremiah sung his "Mottettos" with the zyther; Saint Cecilia sung her meditations "Soliloqui" on the organ; the Holy Arch Bishop Saint Ambrogio, protector of Milan, applied himself to this art to such a degree that he composed the hymns of grace, sacred to the Lord, in order to keep the religious fervor to a high standard among the people of his Diocese. This singing took the name of Ambrogian chant "Canto-Ambrosiano." Saint Gregory reformed this ecclesiastic chant, introducing into it the "Introitus"



and the style took the name of Gregorian chant, "Canto-Gregoriano"; Guido Aretino, the venerable monk, invented the so-called "Canto Fermo" and in some places "Canto Figurato," (of which we are now talking), adding real value to the system which he left us.

Greece and Rome have given many testimonials in favor and honor of Music. Take the Emperors, Alexander the Great, Tito Andriano, and Marco Aurelio, were they not all very distinguished in this art and also her great protectors? Homer assures us that Chirone taught music to Achille, and Homer himself used to sing his own poems, accompanying himself with the lyre and zyther. Cimone and Epaminonda, great generals, enjoyed in the same degree the directing of a choir and the leading of an army.

Temistocle, Licinio Graffo, Marco Cecilio and Appio Claudio, when returning from their victories, could not appreciate the value of their triumphs unless they were accompanied by music.

Not only the ancient heroes cultivated music, but also the great legislators and philosophers did not consider themselves complete unless they had a knowledge of music.

Solone, a Grecian philosopher, wished to study music when he was an old man. Socrates, the honor of the Grecian Lyceums, considered the knowledge of music indispensable to be perfect as a philosopher, and at the age of sixty years, he had the rules of

music dictated to him. If we were to believe what Laerzio says: "Pittagora placed the study of music before many other studies and gave it the same attention as Geometry and Arithmetic, and indeed, with such good results that Svida and Boezio say that from the accidental sound of three hammers in a blacksmith's shop, he discovered the first and the proportion of the principal consonance of the intervals of music."

In one word, all the ancient writers state and assure us, (Luciani's gymnastic plutar de musique) that music in that time was considered a necessary art by all people of common sense and knowledge, and the belief was carried to such an extent that people who had no knowledge of music were considered illiterate, as we consider men today who cannot read or write. We can prove this statement by referring you to the speech of the crown of the Royal Academy of Music of Mantua, published there in those records.

Music is such an art that Plato, Aristotle, Cicerone, and Saint Augustin overwhelm it with praise. One calls it "heavenly discipline," another "celestial," another "pleasure," and another calls it "relief of human miseries." We do not find such a number of superlative praises for any other art. Saint Augustin, who has written many books, speaks profusely of music and in fact in his Book IV, Chap. IV of the "Trinity" he shows us that every man from natural instinct feels the suavity of music and the power of musical harmony. That even the uncultured man

in all his ruggedness and with no musical knowledge feels its effects.

I give all these assertions, in order to satisfy those who still doubt the power of music. And in fact if more attention was paid to everything that is written today about the effect which music produces, there would not be the need to influence people of every condition to cultivate it.

Music by its hidden, divine power grasps the human heart, stirs it, wraps it about itself and modifies it at will. Now it disturbs, then cheers it; now fills it with love or fright and then moves it to mirth or tears, and all through the secret work of harmony and especially by virtue of song. Take, for example, the "furors of Saul" which were calmed by David's harp. Take the infamies of Alexander provoked with Frigia's Cantilena. Were they not calmed by Timoteo with his Lidia? And today, are not our own moods of melancholy dispelled by music and song? Music has also been used to relieve illness. This is proven by the records of the Academy of Science of Paris in the years MDCCVII-MDCCVIII. Other similar statements are reported by George Frank De Franckenan, in his book "Satirae Medicae" XX., Lipsiae apud maur. Georg. Weidman MDCCXXII in 12 to page 464 where a medical discourse "De Musica" will be found. Macrobio Lib. 2 in suan scrip. C. 3 says, that music cures also bodily disease.

Marziano Cappella states that in ancient times

fever was cured with song and the same cure was used to heal wounds. (Perhaps their souls made cheerful and relieved by music, had an influence upon the body, and excited the restitution of strength to the diseased part.) Asclopiade, with the gentle smoothness of his singing, cured deafness. Talete of Creta used music to chase away pestilence and other infirmities. Frischlin "Nid. in orat. pro musica habit." 1574 p. 204, speaking of Clinia Pittagorico says that he used to have recourse to his lyre as medicine to cure himself of spells of rage from which he suffered. That music cures pestilence and other infirmities is also asserted by Galeno "De sanit. tuend." Lib. 1 C. II.

I will add another example known to all who are familiar with the lives of great musicians who lived not so long ago. Some men were sent to Rome to assassinate "Allessandro Stradella," a famous musician. When the assassins reached Rome they made inquiry concerning Stradella, as to where they could find him. At that moment he was in the church of St. John Laterano, singing one of his own Oratorios. They went immediately to that cathedral in order to see him and to be able to follow him until the propitious moment arrived to carry out their cruelty. When they reached the church, Stradella was singing with his accustomed suavity and with such sweetness that the assassins, moved and won by the melody of his singing, not only abandoned the idea of killing him and thus lost the gold that they were to

receive for their deed, but their hearts were so deeply touched that conversion revealed those treasures of worth which can be found in the hardest man. They repented for having entered into the plot to carry out such an inhuman design, and touched by remorse for having planned to destroy the life of such a rare artificer, they decided to respect him and keep him as sacred. To that end they waited for him and told him their reason for being there, and in order that he might protect himself from persecution and vengeance told him that he had a great enemy.

As a last example I will tell you what music did for the cruel man Amuratte IV. (1). (Extract of the history of the Ottoman Empire by Prince Cantemir, published in Paris in 1743, Vol. 4, in 12th, to Book 3, Kingdom of Amuratte, to the letter K.) When he took the city of Bagdad he ordered that without exception every citizen was to be killed. Among the unfortunates was Schac-culi, a valiant Persian musician. He begged so hard for his life that he was allowed to appear before Amuratte before being killed and to whom he spoke thus: "I do not feel sorry to lose my life, but I regret that with my death such an excellent art as music shall also die. By living I hoped to bring it to perfection. Let me live only long enough to perfect this divine art, and if I succeed in reaching the goal to which I aspire, I shall die happier than if I possessed your empire." Schac-culi was permitted to give an exhibition of his knowledge. He took in his hands a "Scheschadar" (a

kind of harp) and accompanying himself, he sang the "Conquest of Bagdad" and the "Triumph of Amuratte" with such sweetness and feeling, that the Prince felt so enraptured he not only stopped the butchery at once, but returned liberty to those people.

I have nothing more to say, except to encourage the young students and lovers of this art to apply themselves with earnestness and good will, in order that they may some day, become an honor to themselves, to their country and to their art!

## CHAPTER II

### THE DIVERSE SCHOOLS, FAMOUS MEN AND DISTINGUISHED WOMEN, WHO HAVE FLOURISHED IN THE ART OF SINGING IN THE PAST CENTURY, AND ARE STILL FLOURISHING TO-DAY

**A**LTHOUGH the rules and fundamental principles of music are well known and are everywhere observed and followed, the varied ways of applying them in instrumental as well as in vocal music, render the execution different. The amount of pleasure to be derived, depends upon the execution. As the purpose of this work is to deal with vocal music, or the art of singing, I will disclose the different methods and systems followed.

The systems which have characterized the diverse schools of this beautiful art are varied. Many methods have been and are still used in any one of these particular schools. Every learned master follows his own judgment; molding his ideas by the ability and intelligence of his pupils. In spite of this fact, many men and women of great worth and

virtuosity, have come from all these schools and systems, before the public.

The success of a singer depends mostly upon the science of his teacher and his method of directing him, and also upon his ability to understand the nature of his pupil. I do not intend to speak of the schools of other nations, but only of that of Italy, because I know it. In practicing I have had the opportunity to make the observations and reflections contained in this small treatise. The most celebrated schools which have flourished for so long a time in Italy and were still in existence at the end of the last century, were those of the "Fedi"\* in Rome, of Francesco Antonio Pistochi in Bologna, of Giuseppe Ferdinando Brivio in Milan, of Francesco Peli in Modena, of Francesco Redi in Florence, of Giuseppe Amadori in Rome, of Nicolo Porpora, Leonar-

\*Singular is the industry used by the Fedis in Rome, the school that at the end of the last century (XDC) was the most famous of Italy. Angelino Bontempi of Perugia says that those valiant singers used to take their pupils very often for a stroll where there was the famous echo in the Valley of St. Paul. There they exercised their pupils to sing in a loud voice... The echo being nothing else than the repetition of the voice, which exposed every defect of the voice of the one singing, thus the students convinced by such evidence of their faults, could correct them more easily. These famous masters were associated with Bernardo Pasquino, a celebrated organ and cembalo player; with Archangelo Carelli, a composer of note and a violin player. While communicating the beauties of their arts with themselves, they were of great stimulus to the illustrious students coming out from their school.



do Leo, Francesco Feo, and Donenico Egizio in Naples. Many singers were sent from these schools who were made famous not only by their profession but by the number of new singers they made in return. To these they transmitted in uninterrupted succession the beauties of the art in their own varied styles. They transmitted also the easiest and most natural method of performing these beauties. To proceed in order, I shall mention all those men and women, one by one, who have been the bright lights of our art at the end of the last century. The Chev. Baldassarre Ferri, born in Perugia, possessed a most beautiful, flexible, sweet and harmonious voice and had the widest range one ever heard. He was a unique and prodigious singer and was at all times covered with requests by every monarch of Europe, who wished to do him honors of every kind. After his death, every poet of Italy wrote hymns to commemorate his memory. His contemporaries wrote that words could not express the beauty of his voice, and his graceful manner of singing. He had to a high degree all the necessary schooling in every style of singing. He was joyful, fierce, grave and tender, all at will. He enraptured the hearts with his pathos and was able (in one breath) to go up and down two octaves trilling continually and marking every degree (today this is called chromatic scale) with such perfection and without accompaniment, so that if suddenly the orchestra were to strike a chord on the tone he was singing, whether B-flat or B-sharp, one

would hear in that instant a chord so perfect that it could not but cause comment!

Another singer who flourished at the beginning of this century was Giovanni Paita, the splendor of Liguria, born in Genoa. Very few people could compare with him in singing and acting. Francesca Boschi of Bologna was a celebrity of such intelligence that in Venice she was baptized the "Musical Solomon."

Two other celebrated singers were Siface and Chev. Matteucci, who were considered singular for their evenness of voice and interpretation. Matteucci after having satisfactorily served at the court of Spain, returned when an old man to his home in Naples where he was still living in 1730. Out of pure devotion, this great man sang in church every Saturday. Although he was eighty years of age, he was still able to sing in any style and preserved a voice of such clarity and purity, that if he was not seen, one would think him a singer in the flower of his youth. This same gift of preserving the voice at a very advanced age was given also to Gaetano Orsini, who died covered with honors at the Imperial Court of Vienna.

Francesco Antonio Pistocchi\* at the end of the past century felt called by the Lord to the retired life of the Fathers of the Oratorio in Forli. After some

\*He was admitted a composer to the celebrated academy of the Filarmonics of Bologna, in the year 1690, and was Prince of the academy in the years 1708-1710.

time, he took up his residence in Bologna, his native town and there opened a school of singing. He assisted every pupil with such abnegation and love and taught such doctrine that it will be expedient to stop for a moment and consider a few of his pupils in order that you may deduct his science and knowledge. One of his most famous pupils, was Antonio Bernacchi of Bologna (and my teacher.) He, as he confessed himself, was not gifted with a very good voice. He was persuaded by his friends, and decided to trust himself absolutely under the direction of Pistocchi, who not only greeted him very kindly, but at once mapped out for him his line of study, which would eliminate his defects and place him as soon as possible in condition to benefit himself by the advantage which may be hoped for as a fruit of constant application in the exercising of music. Bernacchi undertook his difficult task bravely, willing to study the necessary length of time as the rules of his teacher required. He never missed his daily lessons, in order to avail himself of his teacher's advice. During the time of his study, he not only refused to sing in any of the churches and theatres, but even refused to sing for his most intimate friends. He continued living in this way, until his teacher gave him permission to do otherwise, and at that time he startled the world with his art. My pen is too arid to pretend to tell you all the honors received by this man. It is enough for me to say, that he was universally admired in Italy, Germany, England and

singularly at the Court of Bavaria, where he sang for many years with the illustrious Bartolino di Faenza, and he was one of the greatest individuals of the profession, as all those will certify who heard him sing and there are many such persons still living. This one instance is a great example showing the advantage to be derived from the interest of a good teacher and the results which a conscientious student can expect from close application. Thus to render the natural defects insensible and to curb\* the organs of the voice, so that a bad voice can be changed not only into one of mediocrity, but into a thoroughly good voice. Antonio Bernacchi† not only kept one of the principal places as a singer, but also followed in the steps of his teacher and opened a school for

\*The organs of the voice can be curbed only in tender youth at the age of ten or twelve years; at such age they were admitted at the school at that time, but at the grown age, bad shapes of vocal organs and harmful habits are a difficult thing to correct; they can be modified but the singing will never reach an ideal degree of perfection. (Note of the translator.)

†He joined the above mentioned academy of the Filarmonics as a composer in the year MDCCXXII. He studied the art of counterpoint under the celebrated Dr. Giuseppe Antonio Bernabei in Munich of Bavaria, and in Bologna under Giovanni Antonio Riccieri. He was Prince of the Academy in the years MDCC XXXXVII-LI. and succeeded in obtaining a pontifical "Bulla" from the Saint Pope Benedetto XIV. in favor of that academy vesting those teachers with the authority to look that the ecclesiastic music be dignified and according to the majesty of God, and to approve those who were to serve as composers of sacred music in the city and diocese of Bologna.

the benefit of young and worthy students. Among his pupils, Carlo Cariani of Bologna (now dead) is especially worth mentioning. Others living are: the famous Giovanni Tedeschi, alias Amadori, who sings at the royal chapel at Naples. Also Tommaso Guarducci, an accomplished chamber singer of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the celebrated and universally known Antonio Raff. These four professors who won renown as singers in their own varied and appropriate styles, also lived such honorable lives that the whole profession can not help but take them as an example.

Antonio Pasi of Bologna, also a pupil of Pistocchi, made a glorious name for himself by his masterly singing. He sang with such rare taste due to his art of perfect portamento and unfolding of the voice. He introduced a mixture of granite composed of graceful gruppettis, turns, light passages, thrills, mordentes and tempo rubato, which he rendered so perfectly and in their proper place, that he formed a style peculiar to himself which was also surprising\*. Giambattista Mirelli, of the same city and school, sang contralto in a sustained style, with a noble "portamento di voce." Yet his voice did not lack sufficient agility of granite quality nor did it lack the thrill and morden-

\*The terms used throughout this book to distinguish the many embellishments and styles of singing which are the special attainments of each artist, being so received in every school of music as such and having a determined significance, do not need further explanation.

te, which altogether, enabled him to perform in any style. His musical accent was one of his best prerogatives, and as he was a man of high culture, his singing was almost perfect, so that he rightly deserved the title of an erudite singer. Another singer of Bologna was Annibale Pio Fabri, alias Balino, who was also a pupil of Pistocchi. He was one of the most excellent tenors of his time and was admired in all the first theatres of Italy, and was warmly welcomed by various princes, especially by S. C. M. Emperor Charles VI., who honored him by offering himself to be godfather for one of his daughters. He was also an honorary member, composer of the Philharmonic Academy in 1719 and Prince of the Academy during the years 1725-29-43-47 and 50. Later he went to fill the position of singer at the Royal Chapel of Lisbon, where he died on August 20 of the year of 1760. Bartolino di Faenza, another pupil of Pistocchi and companion of Bernacchi, made a reputation for himself by his varied and perfect style. You see, these five professors received their instructions from the one teacher, yet each had an absolutely different style—one which corresponded to each one's disposition and natural gifts. This example is sufficient to show us that a good experienced teacher cannot have only one way of instructing his pupils. It proves that to be successful in making perfect singers, a teacher must know every way in which to handle his pupils, in order to train each individual voice; for he must know the right remedy for each

voice. The teacher that possesses this talent will always be admired and revered by the true experts of art. Singers must always pay attention not to acquire that common fault of imitating too closely what they see and hear; for instead of improving their natural gifts, they will often lose them. However, I do not mean to exclude imitation, because by imitating the perfect in music, using sane judgment and modifications suitable to one's own particular talent, one perfects himself. To imitate what the great musicians have done and their originals, demands admiration on account of the difficulty in doing it.

Senesino and Giovanni Carestini distinguished themselves by their originality in singing and good acting. Carestini was born in Mount Filatrana near Marca of Ancona. He went to Milan when twelve years of age, where he won the protection of the noble family Cusani. Out of gratitude to them he sang under the name of Cusanino. Although his voice was naturally beautiful he studied diligently until he could render any style perfectly. He was very young when he became famous. He had a clear mind and delicate and refined judgment in all that he did. Yet he was so modest that he was never satisfied and happy over his work. It once happened that an intimate friend was with him when he was practicing and showed so much enthusiasm over his work, that Carestini said to him: "My friend, I cannot reach the point of satisfying myself; and so it

seems to me that I cannot please others." He continued practicing his songs and embellishments until he really found the greatest pleasure in them himself. This is the reason his singing was always distinguished, decided and sublime. Besides being a perfect singer, he acquired the art of acting and mastered it so well that with his splendid personality he made himself fitted to represent the greatest and noblest parts of the operatic roles.

At the same time that men were winning admiration all over Europe, women of equal value commenced to appear and followed the same glorious way. One of these, who without doubt distinguished herself more than others was Vittoria Tesi Tramonini, born in Florence, where she received her first rules and precepts of art from the hands of the great chapel master, Francesco Redi. She then went to Bologna to continue her study under the direction of the renowned Francesco Campeggi, assisting at the same time at the Bernacchi School. In spite of the fact that she was a great master of singing, yet following her inclination and encouraged by her first successes, started to perfect herself in acting, and added in this way another art. She was endowed with all these rare prerogatives which are seldom combined and which were all in her, a beautiful appearance, accompanied by a very graceful bearing, a clear pronunciation, and the intuition to give to the words their true meaning. It was thus expedient for her to learn to adapt herself to clearly distinguish each



character through action, bearing, "make-up" and self possession. She had such perfect intonation that there was never a quiver in the most critical and dramatic passages. All were in her, singular gifts, and thus rendered her "master" of her art. This woman received many honors. In 1769, the King of Denmark gave her the cross of the "Order of Constancy and Faithfulness." In a word we can say that in her time she was one of the most important supports of the Italian theatre. This is one of the many examples of the value that it is to have a knowledge of one's own ability and strength and to be able to make an examination of the natural disposition which each of us possess in order that one can be successful in his study and in a corresponding way of living. It is true that Vittoria Testi Tramontini with only her voice and art of singing (although perfect) could have never reached the celebrated renown that she did, without her remarkable attainments as an actress and in declamation; covered with honors, she died in Vienna in the year 1775. Following Tesi, came Faustina Bordoni, wife of the celebrated composer Giovanni Haffe\* alias Saffone. She was born

\*Giovanni Haffe went to Naples in the year 1722 to continue and perfect himself in the art of counterpoint under the direction of the celebrated Alessandro Scarlatti. It is not necessary for me to explain here what improvements he made, because although still very young he distinguished himself and won admiration all over Europe. This artist after having written many very successful operas for the leading and diverse theatres of Italy, accepted an honorable position at the Royal and Electoral House of Saxony

in Venice where she learned the art of singing under the direction of Michelangelo Gasperini from Lucca. (This master was not only perfect in his art but he became very efficient in counterpoint under the valiant and learned Antonio Lotti. He wrote some theatrical works of very fine nature, as well as some well developed church compositions). Our Faustina Bordoni, well educated by her teacher, formed such a rare style of clear agility, which she used with

where for many years, he wrote many beautiful church compositions and operas for that theatre, where the public always asked for the very best and finished in music. It is the great wish of our best professors that this great man should consent to have published, if not all of them, at least part, of his most acclaimed works, so that they may serve as a model and stimulant to the young generation of students. He was so exceedingly modest that he never consented to such requests and to this day our wishes have remained unsatisfied. Although he accepted the royal position in Saxony, yet he never failed to come very often to Italy, where he wrote many operas, and was always well received and honored. This great reputation brought him to Paris, under the government of Louis XV, King of the French, and also to Berlin, by the reigning Frederik II, King of Prussia, where he met with the same success and universal admiration. From the Imperial Court, he also received distinctions and favors, and of late the most magnanimous Empress, Maria Teresa, has taken advantage of this celebrated master in the most luminous occasions of the various weddings of the Imperial family. The artistic life of this great man has been rather short, but yet we discern that at any time and at any place, his worth has been fully understood and appreciated; and now he leads a very quiet life in Venice. He has much glory and is called by the great professors, "The Father of Music."

great ease, that it brought her high honors at the very beginning of her career. Her style and agility were very superior because they vibrated to the right degree. She sustained passages of three and six notes in such a new and also difficult way, and guided them with the right proportion without languishing in ascending as well as descending, giving also those shades of coloring which are so necessary in the blending of any embellishment. The perfect and happy rendition of such agility is something so above the ordinary, that it establishes the character of great professor for those who master it. Our Faustina possessed all these gifts, hence no one was ever able to surpass or imitate her. Besides these gifts, she had a quick and ready trill and mordente, and also perfect intonation. She was a master in the unfolding and sustaining of the voice, and the fine art of holding and retaking of the breath, all these gifts were a sublime quality in her, acquired through assiduous study with which she cultivated all the natural dispositions. Thus she was enabled to perform everything with ease and that perfection required by the rules of art. From this it is easily seen that she quickly won great renown in the theatres of Italy. In fact, she was enthusiastically received everywhere. Before marrying she went to London, where people grew so enchanted by her extraordinary ability that she had to stay many years. When she returned to Italy, she married the illustrious master, Giovanni Haffe, and accepted the

position offered them by the King of Saxony. Afterwards she traveled with her husband, sharing with him the same honors, and now both are living very quietly at Venice, taking a well deserved rest.

Francesca Cuzzoni, born at Parma, received her musical education from Francesco Lanzi, an excellent professor, under whom she became a singularly good artist, not only for her style, but also because she was gifted with an angelical voice, noted for its clearness and suavity. She sang "canto spianato" and also "portamento," the latter she acquired to such perfection, that united with an extraordinary evenness of voice, it enabled her to win admiration and to enrap-ture every soul. This woman possessed all the necessary requisites to be truly great. She had sufficient agility and art of guiding the voice to sustain, reinforce and diminish it to that degree which made her deserve the title "professor." When singing a melodic song, she knew how to adorn and embellish it with such varied "gruppettos" and passages without marring the melody; now blending, then vibrated with trills and mordentes, now "staccato" then sustained, and then loose runs in a redoubled style, soaring with a portamento from a chest tone to a high head tone, and finally, all these were done with that fine perfection that caused admiration and wonder. Her voice was so accustomed to a perfect execution that there never was a difficulty which she could not overcome. Her high tones were unequalled and perfect; intonation was born in her. She had an original and

inventive mind. She had a correct idea of things and her choice of embellishments was something new. She left aside the usual and common, and made her singing rare and wonderful. She was famous throughout Europe and all were striving to have her in their theatres. The English people knowing her merits, demanded her in London four consecutive seasons. The first time she went there she married Pietro Sandoni from Bologna, a celebrated chapel master and a great professor of gravicembalo and organ. This great man became established in London and had a reputation running parallel with that of the great Frederic Handel. As a proof of this on many occasions, the people of London wished to hear them both on separate organs at the same service—one played the "proposte" and the other the "risposte." Besides the above mentioned artists, other musicians and women singers who for their art and their way of using their voices, deserve to be mentioned also, in the musical history of Italy, are: Gaetano Majorano, singer of the Royal Chapel of Naples, alias Caffarelli, born in Bari, Italy, When very young he went to Naples and applied himself to the art of singing with such assiduity that he very soon became prominent among those professors. In the progress of time he sang in London, Vienna and finally in Lisbon. He made great success as a singer and also as a learned man. I will not stop to mention all his abilities because he is still living and there are too many people all through Europe who know him.

Carlo Scalzi from Genoa succeeded in this profession and won high praise. In succession the following gave good account of themselves: Gioacchino Conti, alias Gizziello, Neapolitan; Agostino Fontana from Turin, pupil of Antonio Pasi; Niccola Regginelli Neapolitan; Angelo Mario Monticelli; Giuseppe Appiani, alias Appianino; and Felice Salimbeni. The last three were from Milan; and finally two good tenors, Gregorio Babbi of Cesena and Angelo Amorevoli of Venice, who were in the service of the Royal Court of Saxony. Among the lady singers of that time (about the year 1740) who adorned our profession was Anna Peruzzi from Bologna. She had a clear and sonorous voice, and with the help of art became perfect in many styles. She sang in many theatres in Italy, and then went to Madrid where she stayed many years, occupying a position of high esteem. Teresa De Reüther, born in Vienna, was a renowned chamber singer of the Imperial Court and became celebrated for her many styles. She mastered agility, sustained singing, also had expression and vivacity and was an intelligent actress. Caterina Visconti, called the "little Viscountess" was born in Milan. She studied with Ferdinando Brivio and became an extraordinary singer, being endowed with a full, round voice, which through art was made light, sweet and rich in the right proportion. Another who achieved fame was Giovanna Astrua, of Turin who was also a pupil of Ferdinando Brivio. She sang for a long time at the Royal Court of Berlin.

Regina Mingotti, born at Naples of German parents, went very young to the Court of Saxony and there the Prince ordered the famous Nicolo Porpora, who was then one of the salaried ones at the Court, to teach her to sing. Caterina Gabrielli of Rome after having studied in Naples, sang in Italy, St. Petersburg and London with great success. Others who achieved success in music and whose names will pass down in history, are: Domenico Anibali, born in Macerata, in the service of the elected Court of Saxony. Giovanni Manzuoli, born in Florence, celebrated chamber singer of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Fillippo Elisi, born in Fossombrone. Antonio Hubert, alias Porporino, born in Naples, dedicated his services to the Royal Court of Berlin, Giuseppe Santarelli, born in Forli, became singer of the pontifical chapel in Rome, Chev. Gaetano Guadagni, born in Lodi, Philarmonic Academician, now living at Padua, was a member of the choir of the chapel of St. Antony. Ferdinando Mazzanti, born in Tuscany. Giuseppe Aprile, born in Naples and singer at that Royal Chapel. Pasquale Potenza, Neapolitan Singer at the Chapel of St. Marco. Giuseppe Millico, Neapolitan. Carlo Conciolini, in the service of the Royal Court of Berlin. Venanzio Rauzzini, born in Rome. Ferdinando Tenducci, born in Tuscany. Giambattista Vasquez, born in Domaso on the Lake of Como, in the service of the Royal Court of Lisbon. Antonio Goti, born in Tuscany, in the service of the Grand Duke of Tus-

cany. Giuseppe Cicognani, born in Cesena. Gasparo Pacchiarotti, born at Fabriano, in the service of the Royal Chapel of Naples. Salvatore Conforti, born in Ascoli, (my birth-place,) singer at the Royal Chapel of Naples. Giovanni Rubinelli, born at Brescia, and others. Among women I give the names of: Rosa Tartaglini, wife of the good tenor Tibaldi from Bologna, who died in the year 1775. Lucrezia Aguiari, born in Ferrara; Mattei Anna De Amicis, born in Naples; Elizabetta Teyber, born in Vienna, and Antonia Girelli Aguillar.

It may puzzle my readers that in spite of the fact that we still have so many great artists flourishing all over the world, the idea has taken root not only in Italy, but abroad, that our vocal art is in decadence and that we lack worthy schools and good singers. I must deny such an opinion concerning our schools, but unfortunately it is true as to singers; for we have to experience the occasion of a present day singer rising with honor to take the place of those who are still our glory. The fact remains however, that we still have youth endowed with all the talents and qualifications necessary to make excellent singers.

In my opinion, the wrong lies in the vile greed for money that seems to have taken possession of those singers whose only apparent aim is to rush their pupils forward in their musical career in order that they (inspired by their avariciousness) may profit by those contracts they have stipulated with their pupils. They neglect to apply the good rules of the art and



the precepts transmitted to them; and present to the public untrained voices and undeveloped intelligences which only bar the student from further advancement through the secrets and delicacy of the art, and lead him on to a wrong conceit. How can we cherish any expectation of creating new artists under such unfortunate disorder? What hope can remain when we see a pupil literally sold by the teacher to the manager, the teacher's only interest being the enormous percentage to be paid him for an incomplete and unfinished course of instruction; concerning himself more as to the quantity of his pupils than to the quality of them? Is it possible for one to become a singer by giving only a hasty glance at the general rules of this art which can be acquired only by long application and close observation? Thus through the lack of rigid practice, the best talents and the best voices are lost to the profession. Besides all these deplorable results which are easily discerned by everyone who knows the profession, are these: that the young student once abandoned to himself at a too early age, and associating with persons who are not in love with moral living, injures his health and ruins forever chest and voice. And what is the worst he loses sight of the rules of good morals. Another great disadvantage results from the fact, that in this present day, there are many presuming to teach the art of singing who in truth never learned the rules! They do not know in any degree how to guide a student or to teach him

perfect intonation and rhythm! They believe it sufficient to merely be able to play the violin or the cembalo to be competent to train a voice. So by offering their services for less money, than a good dilligent, skilful and patient teacher can afford, they find persons who are attracted by the idea of economy and trust their voices to such teachers! These teachers think they have done all that is expected when their pupils are capable of performing some passages, although imperfectly, and give some shrilling tones which are an offense to the sense of hearing. This is the instruction given today by many who call themselves teachers and such is their knowledge!

It is a profanation of the art that a bad violin or piano player, should have the presumption of calling himself a vocal teacher without knowing the prime elements. They make their pupils yell with all the strength of their lungs. They spoil beautiful voices, because they do not know how to show them how to produce and unfold them. We hear unevenness of registers, singing out of pitch, voices in the throat and afonicia, because these teachers pretend that they ought to perform with their voices just as they perform with the fingers on their respective instruments. How will it be possible for such teachers to create new, good singers? Would it not be highly desirable that this kind of schools be abolished from the profession and those only admitted to teach who know and wish to put into practice the

true method of instruction, in a fatherly way and for the true love of their art? The only schools where these deplorable defects have not yet entered and from which splendid specimens of ability still come, which honor our beautiful art, are the conservatories of Venice and Naples.

The conservatories at Venice are four and all of them are too well known to be in need of elaboration here. Those of Naples are three. First, the one of Santa Maria di Loreto; second, the one of St. Onofrio; and third, that of *Pieta dei Turchini*, founded in the year of 1583 and reopened 1592. In the first of these schools we count as a first teacher, Sig. Saverio Valente. In the second school are the teachers: Sig. Carlo Lotumaci and Giacomo Insanguine, alias Monopoli. In the third school, Sig. Lorenzo Fago, alias Tarantino; Sig. Pasquale Cafaro, Master of the Royal Chapel, and under his direction Sig. Nicola Sala is teaching. In these conservatories the youth is given free instruction not only in music, but also in religion and good morals. These establishments which are so useful to the country and are a relief to the Homes, have given the greater part of those celebrated professors of whom Italy can be proud and of whom I shall speak in Chapter XIV.

In the art of singing they reached the high degree of perfection. Their merits have been widely known in Italy during many epochs. Out of regard for the best advantage of young people, anyone who has not ability enough to succeed in secular life is guided to

the ecclesiastic life and the directors of those conservatories find for such a one a position in some of the many cathedrals. It is to be wished that in the future many of these charitable and noble hearted benefactors of humanity will be born in order to multiply such advantageous institutions, in behalf of the musical art of good morals and religion, of which today only Venice and Naples have the right to feel proud. Another school that deserves to be mentioned here, is the one founded by the noble Chev. Bartolomeo Nucci from Pescia. This man, purely for his enjoyment, for forty years, continued the methods and traditions of the ancient masters. He did not teach for mercenary reasons, but simply for the glory of it and for humanity. For these reasons he only admitted to his school those whom he knew to have the necessary requisites to succeed, and these he taught with such love and patience, that those who gave the necessary application could not help but become distinguished artists. From such a school then, because directed by a very honest man, who does not teach for selfish interest, and who does not spare the necessary work nor time, and who teaches methodically, good artists will always come out, as long as such a noble man lives. Among the many pupils of Chev. Nucci, deserves special mention, the celebrated Mazzanti.

In the liberal arts, the success of the pupil depends principally upon the science of his teacher and his ability to instruct. Especially it can be said that in

singing, the success of the pupil depends upon the efficiency of his teacher. A master of sculpture, of architecture and of musical composition may not be of the highest standard, yet his pupils may attain a degree of distinction and become great artists because in their vocation they have the privilege of studying the works of the great masters of past generations. Thus by reading histories, treatises and lectures, with accurate illustrations, the student can atone for that which he has not been able to assimilate from his professor.

In fact in the art of painting we have the immortals, Raffaello, Correggio, Tiziano, Leonardo da Vinci, Domenichino, Guido Reni, and other masters. In sculpture, we have the noble Grecian models, as Apolline di Belvedere, Niobe, Gladiatore, Antinoo, Laocoonte, etc. In architecture, all the schools are represented, the Grecian, Roman, Gothic, Byzantine, Italian, etc. Their beautiful temples, palaces, cathedrals, museums and amphitheatres, although erected many centuries ago, still stand majestically before us. Finally, in the art of musical composition we have the masterpieces of Scarlatti, Bononcini, Vinci, Pergolese, Saffone Jomelli, and many other famous men, which are of inestimable assistance in the glorious ascent to fame through perfect models.

The precepts to be derived from close observation and study of all that has been accomplished in the arts above mentioned, are marvelously stimulating to the student, and with such models as a guide, and

aided by industry and perseverance, he can acquire perfection in his work. But not every art has perfect models for the student to observe and copy. Singing, is one of those arts which lives more through the transmission of the precepts than from example or illustration. We have not and cannot have monuments of perfect voices, as a singer cannot live for generations, nor will the method of singing and teaching by which he perfected his art. True we have vocal music written by famous masters and rendered perfectly by our great singers; but in such an instance we get only the conception of a simple melody which shows just enough musical phrasing to allow the talented interpreter full liberty to embellish as he desires and conceives. Therefore, if the student wishes to take it as a model he has it only in embryo, and cannot from that have any conception of the method which was used to render it with brilliancy and skill. Let us take for example, the renowned tenor, Farinello, and let us have on paper the variations which he introduced in his music to beautify it. Undoubtedly we will discover his intelligence and his art, but we will be unable to arrive at the precise methods by which he has given us such a perfect and surprising rendition, because these can be explained only by hearing them in the living voice.

Now if a student left to himself, acquires a harmful habit in his method of singing how can he realize that the habit is a wrong one, and how is he to know whether or not such a habit originates from the natural

defects and those acquired, unless pointed out to him? How much more evident is the necessity that the teacher be thoroughly proficient in his art, and that he be watchful and observant, and eradicate these defects? He must be perfectly skilled and experienced in order to create new artists and so to transmit to the next generation the secrets of that art which has been his glory and renown.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MORAL OBLIGATION OF PARENTS TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN AND THE NECESSARY PRECAU- TIONS TO BE TAKEN BEFORE DEDICA- TING THEM TO THE ART OF SINGING

**T**HE corruption of musical taste which is too effeminate, has made such headway that the tendency is to teach voice culture to develop strength only, and to extend the voice to the highest tones of the head register of the human throat. There remains little hope just at present for the elimination of such an undesirable and harmful system of teaching the art of singing to those men who are willing to devote their talents that they may give enjoyment to others. In the first place, it is greatly to be desired that the number of such students were not so great; and that the majority of parents were more inspired by devotion to art, by morals, and Christianity; and before assigning a boy or a girl to the life of a theatrical or church singer, that they would grant the question serious and due consideration. As the subject is one of great impor-



tance, I will endeavor to discuss it calmly and with all the earnestness due it, dealing with plain facts and details.

It is my opinion that the question of our childrens' life work is of great consequence and much care should be exercised to avoid exposing a child to the unhappiness of failure. Before assigning them to the art of singing, it is the parents' stern duty to assure themselves by unquestioned tests whether or not nature has endowed the prospective student with all the necessary qualifications. Above all, children should not be allowed to commence training at too tender an age, because of the vague and indefinite tendencies they may develop. The vocal organs are inconsistent, until the age of puberty is reached. If at that time developments prove that the student has not the making of a successful singer he will be a loss to himself and to his country, and what is more pathetic than a man without a profession! We must initiate to this art then, only those to whom nature has given a good voice backed by a natural musical intelligence, both qualities being absolutely necessary to insure success. It is not an easy task to prescribe rules for such a matter, as in reality each individual case must be passed upon by an intelligent and experienced teacher.

Let us take away from the parents the belief that because they hear their children sing some little song in a graceful manner, they are competent to judge. They must seek the advice of a professor of recognized

ability and honesty; one competent to judge as to whether the prospective pupil is free from those defects that become obstacles too great to surmount. Aside from those first few impressions given by the prospective pupil under test, there are many more observations necessary, of so delicate and difficult a nature that only a professor can make them. The multitude believe that one who has an elevated chest and a well developed thorax, and can make lots of noise, has the essentials to become a good singer. The strength of the voice depends, it is true, upon the quantity of air, and the velocity with which it is compressed from the lungs; thus the wider the chest the larger the "aspra arteria" and the larynx. All these qualities combined, create greater strength of voice, which is produced from the air bursting forth from the cavity of the thorax. In the opinion of physiologists, the lungs are the instruments which aid in speaking and in singing with more or less force, according to the degree of expansion of the lungs and chest and their ability to expel the inhaled air. But then it is also their opinion that the lungs are not the real organs which form the voice in the throat. The voice forms itself in the mouth by the flux created by the air in passing through the vocal organs in the act of inspiration and expiration. The air from the lungs acts upon the larynx in singing, just as it acts upon the head of a flute that is leaned to the lips for playing. The lungs are not the actual organs of the voice; they merely furnish the material, the air; the

real organs of the voice are: larynx, glottis, uvula, tongue, palatine arch, hard palate and lips. These organs are the means by which the voice is given its diverse modulations, so that the better organized they are the more perfect, strong and clear the voice will be. The voice, so to speak, suspends itself in descending from the highest to the lowest tones, and runs diverse modulations according to the varied manner in which the air is compressed by the larynx. In speaking, these organs are quiet at intervals, but when used for singing they are in a state of continual action and excitement; the muscles of the larynx carry the greatest burden, as these are the organs which direct the voice. These muscles contract strongly in the higher tones and relax in the lower ones. A splendid illustration is shown in the singing of the birds. The sweet songsters of the feathered class have a narrow epiglottis, but those animals which make harsh, disturbing noises, have very broad ones.

I conclude by saying that it is not enough for one to have merely an elevated chest and a capacity for big noise to become a successful singer. One must have a harmonious proportion of all the vocal organs, and if any of these organs are imperfect, by nature or by disease, the voice will likewise be imperfect. The more perfect the organs of the voice, the more certainty the aspirant can have of becoming a successful singer, if guided by an experienced teacher.

In testing the voice of a prospective pupil, the

teacher should be very careful to see that his epiglottis is free and not stiffened by the hardening of the thyroid glands, commonly called goitre. He should also note that the action of the little muscles of the larynx are not impeded by the somissilar glands or from the hardening of the amigdales. The teacher must give strict attention to the following facts: That there is no physical disorder in the uvula or arch of the palate; that the tongue is flexible, and that the lips close symmetrically; that the chin is not extended too far forward so as to mar the symmetry of the mouth; that the teeth are free from irregularity, and that the nose is not too flat nor too long. If the intelligent teacher takes all these things into consideration and finds his pupil physically harmonious with himself, then he may be taken with a fairly good chance of success. However, if the pupil proves too defective in one or several of these instances, the teacher cannot hope to make him a successful singer. Imperfect organs of voice are incurable and hence will inevitably result in imperfect singing. It is very true that the glands (tonsils) can be removed, but to have a successful result this operation must be performed in youth. It is also the duty of the parents of the prospective student to see if there are any physical defects, which, though they may not have any connection with the vocal organs, yet nevertheless have a great deal of influence. Doctors should be consulted in these cases.

I wish to add that a pupil's physical features are of

much import. A singer possessing a noble, sweet and pleasing face will be well received by the public, though he may have a small degree of talent; while, on the contrary, an expressive face with homely or harsh features will not be tolerated unless the person is unexcelled in the art of singing.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCERNING THE VOICE IN GENERAL.—THE CHEST REGISTER AND THE HEAD REGISTER OR “FALSETTO”

I cannot begin this chapter on the voice better, than by quoting the words of the illustrious Gio. Giacomo Rousseau in his noted musical dictionary: “The voice is the accumulation or compound of all the sounds, which a man can utter with his vocal organs.” As there are not two physiognomies alike, so there are hardly two voices resembling each other.

Nature in her generosity of giving away her gifts, never puts them, save in rare exceptions, all in one person; so it seldom happens that we find one person gifted with all those harmonious conditions of vocal organs that form a perfect voice. The truth is, that we find sometimes voices which are very strong and whose sound is vigorous, bright and liquid; others are flexible and sweet; then some voices have very wide range and are exceedingly sonorous, while others have small range, but are admired because of the purity of tone, its evenness and color. On the other

hand, we find harsh and heavy voices; others are light and flexible, and some, although the tones are beautiful, they are very oddly distributed. Nevertheless we do find voices which have the same quality throughout their whole range.

I shall talk more extensively of the faulty voices in my seventh chapter. In order to not wander too much in academic talk upon the high and low quality of the voices, on their characteristics (judging from their extension) nor on the rules or limitations in which every voice ought to be kept, whether soprano, tenor or bass. I shall talk only of the voice in general, as it is considered by artists in their practical use.

The voice ordinarily divides itself into two registers, one called chest register and the other head register, or falsetto. I said ordinarily, because sometimes one has been found (but this is a rare case), to possess the singular gift to sing all in the chest register. I do not speak of this gift, but only of the voice in general, which is divided into two registers. Every student, whether he is soprano, contralto, bass or tenor, can easily know the difference between these registers. He needs only to sing the scale to test this. If it is a soprano, start from "sol" on the second line of the staff and reach the following "re" on the fourth line and he will notice that these five tones are sonorous, and come out with strength and clearness and without effort, because they come from the chest; while if he sings up to "mi" when the organs are not suitable, he will sing this tone with much effort, feeling fatigue

in the throat, and consequently the tone is feeble. In case that a pupil has not much chest strength, he will be able to draw the voice only to "do" and he will have difficulty to reach "re." Now, if there be any pupil, lacking chest endurance, he will not find it too hard to reach "si" in the chest register, but he will find it very hard to reach "do." Now this major or minor facility so sensible, in these cases, is very noticeable to any one who pays close attention to it, and it leads to the deduction of knowing with security the change of the voice when one has reached the end of the first register, and is entering the second; naturally we recognize it through the weak sounds. Experience teaches what I have above stated. It will convince anyone who will take the trouble of attentively observing, that the chest voice is not in everybody equally strong. The reason is, that as one has more or less strong organs of the chest, so he will have more or less strength in the chest register.

The great art of the singer consists in acquiring the ability to render imperceptible to the ear, the passing from the one register to the other. In other words, to unite the two, so as to have perfect quality of voice throughout the whole range, each tone being on a level with your best and purest tone. This is art and it is not easy to reach the goal. It takes study, work and industry to correct the defects originated from the more or less strong constitution of the vocal organs, and it requires ability and such a careful use of the voice to render it equally sonorous and agreeable,



that few students succeed. Many teachers do not know the practical rules, or else they do not know how to apply them. It is of no use or reason for one to reproach Nature, saying she has not given one a voice of even register. In such a case, the singer should accuse himself, or make a complaint against those teachers who did not know how to guide him the right way. Since this topic is so important, I thought it necessary to dwell upon it in particular, as I will farther on, and show how to correct the defects of singers originated from the above mentioned sources. There is only one way to correct them, (and happily, I have proofs of this from persons of recognized ability) and that is to follow the natural instinct, but never to force Nature. I do not deny that sometimes a fault considered from the standpoint of art, credits the singer with more ability than if the fault were eliminated; this seems to be a paradox: A veiled voice is an impossibility in a large hall or a theatre, unless it has a caressing quality. It can then grasp the heart of the audience, because of this and that admirable quality of voice which is never rough or uneven.

All that I have said concerning the defects of a veiled voice, refers only to sopranos and contraltos but never to a tenor or a bass, because these two voices being the foundation and support of harmony must therefore be robust and sonorous. Such voices cannot develop the tones that a veiled voice can render agreeable.

## CHAPTER V

### INTONATION

**W**HAT I have said so far will have been sufficiently convincing to show that in choosing persons for a musical or vocal career, many things are to be considered and these things can be resolved only after careful and close observation. I have purposely dwelled upon the conditions necessary for a good voice, in order to give a rule for discovering it, and to be able to judge what such a voice is to become. Stating, as I have, that only those should be admitted to the art of singing who have good voices, I do not admit that every one who has a good voice can become a good singer. Although the voice is the first element, there are many defects which can keep the student from succeeding. There is nothing worse than to hear one singing out of pitch, and a throaty or nasal voice is to be preferred to singing out of tune. Since intonation is a cardinal point in harmony, and since there is perfect chord of consonances, if one is detached from its true point, the perfection of the harmony is immediately de-

stroyed. Besides, the voice is the important part of vocal music, and if this is out of pitch, it spoils the harmony of the instruments even if these are perfectly tuned. All the other defects can be corrected if not completely, at least to a point, of being noticeable to those only who are familiar with the art of singing. Singing out of pitch cannot be overcome nor disguised. Even an inexperienced person can notice it, if he has a normal ear. Gradual says\* upon this topic: "One day, I assisted at a little informal musical, where only two or three persons were present. A young lady with very little musical knowledge, and no ear at all, sang a whole scene of an opera off the pitch. She was nearly one half tone sharp the whole time and never noticed it. Her father, whose ear was not any better, but who considered himself a very good critic, never ceased to show a kind of ecstatic admiration during the whole time that the daughter was howling. The only thing needed here, was a syphon to complete. . . . harmony, as suggested later by Mr. N. N."

Young singers have a tendency to sharpen their voices and the old ones to flatten. The dissonance is natural and accidental. The natural is a defect of Nature, who has not endowed certain youths with a sensitive ear for harmony; hence they are not able to distinguish between consonance and dissonance of tones. In such cases, correction is impossible,

\**Essay sur le bon gout in musique.* A. Paris, par Prault, 1732, in 12, page 8.

because there is no way of modifying the imperfect organs of the ear, as can the tones of the diverse instruments be modified by increasing or diminishing their shapes.

It is the stern duty of the teacher to examine and find out what causes the dissonance. This is not difficult to do, but it requires wide experience. One must go very slowly and observe every detail in order to discern causes. The student should be tried at singing early in the morning before eating; and during the day, when the sky is cloudy and also when it is serene; when the air is placid and tranquil, on windy and stormy days; also soon after a full meal. If on all these occasions he sings out of pitch without noticing it and every possible correction is of no avail, then one can state with surety that the fault comes from Nature, herself, or from imperfect hearing. This defect is impossible to correct and the student should be discharged at once.

The dissonance caused accidentally, can be corrected if the teacher is competent to discover and eliminate the cause. Among the temporary causes from which one sings out of pitch, is weakness of chest resulting from disease or temporary illness, or sometimes caused by indigestion, by eating too much or at no regular time or from other similar disorders. Another cause for singing out of pitch, is lack of concentration upon what one is doing, failing to realize why he's taking his lesson. Also, it happens when the student attacks a tone without the help of the

teacher's voice, or of the piano, or both, before feeling perfectly sure of the pitch of the tone he is to attack. Now, if a student sings out of pitch today and sings in pitch tomorrow and recognizes his mistake, then, there is no doubt but that the dissonance is accidental and can be corrected. Here is where the teacher can show his ability in discovering the cause of the error and in showing him how to correct it. Another cause for the student's singing out of pitch, is when he sings accompanied by instruments using the mute. The singer, not hearing the instruments, takes the bad habit of attacking the tone by himself, without the aid of the instruments. This habit renders him incapable in the future of attacking a tone perfectly, when he sings with instruments. So it happens that discords are very noticeable. Sig. Manfredini, in his book "*Begole Armoniche*," published in Venice in the year 1775, page II., discusses my proposition and states that the mute on the instruments is very suitable in accompanying voices. I have great esteem for the merits of this distinguished professor, but I had hoped that his remarks would be directed to beginners as mine are. It is a fact known to every musician, that to accompany a singing master or a professor, only a few fingers are needed on the cembalo and no embellishments are required. Also, the accompaniment should be kept as light as possible. However, it is quite a different matter to accompany a beginner who is not yet sure of intonation. (And it is of the

young student that I am speaking, in the first edition of my book.)

The instruments used with a mute are not loud enough, and I appeal to the experience of hundreds of teachers, who were often unable to sustain and support the intonation in their pupils, even with the help of the strongest cembalo, but had to use the strength of their own voices as well. I am of the opinion that if the cembalo had "fortissimo" pedals like the organs, they would be brought to the aid also, so that all means possible would be used to help the pupil in his intonation. If Sig. Manfredini were as experienced in teaching to sing as he must be in playing the cembalo and in the art of composition (as shown by the good things contained in his works), he undoubtedly would have refrained from criticising my idea. In spite of what he says, I have questioned all the great professors and they all agree, that what I have stated concerning intonation is a great truth. I admit that it is wrong to teach with the cembalo out of tune, but this will be a fault found only with those teachers who do not keep their instruments in order. Sig. Manfredini may be right also, in saying that a quicker method of insuring a student in intonation, is to teach him the right distance between graded tones, as well as by intervals. We do not doubt this, but the difficulty lies in the choosing of the way to teach all these things which would render the student sure of intonation. This method advocated by Sig.

Manfredini has never been used by any other professor, so surely it cannot be practical. On the contrary, until a student is sure of intonation, he must not be allowed to sing alone; instead, he must be aided in every possible way, by striking the tone for him many times, and very loud, on the cembalo, and with the aid of his teacher's voice at the same time. Sig. Manfredini expects too much, indeed, when he thinks that a young student can fix and insure his intonation with the help only of the voice of a bass accompaniment. It seems impossible that such a distinguished professor as he, fails to realize how long it takes a musician to completely master intonation, and be able to sing alone. At this stage he may be called a professor, and I spoke only to students in my book. I must add, that in his perspicacious sagacity, he failed to remember that if the teacher, due to old age, loss of voice, or faulty hearing, does not give the perfect pitch, a student would be much embarrassed to absorb the fruits of good teaching. It is a very different thing to sing the tones as they are written, or as they sound on the cembalo, graceful and with expression. It is known to everyone, that the help of the voice is indispensable to insure success.

We conclude, then, that the teacher's voice is of great help to the student who is not sure of intonation and who with the aid of the accompaniment only would never be sure of his tone. Above all let us remember to instruct the pupil well from the begin-

ning in the fundamental parts of the art, and then teach him the many kinds of embellishments; otherwise, the pupil will become one of those singers who is capable of performing only what his teacher has taught him.

One way found to be very practical to insure intonation, is to show the student and make him understand the exact distance between one tone and another in graded scales as well as in intervals. The experienced teacher knows perfectly well which way is the easiest and most natural to insure intonation. This demands time and persistent effort. After the student has been tested as to his ability in intonation, and after having found him to have a good ear, then, in order to insure him, he must be kept Sol-Fa-ing on graded tones; first on the ascending and then on the descending scales. All this work must be executed with scrupulous attention, seeing that every tone is perfectly in pitch. Then, a solfeggio must follow with notes forming the normal intervals. After these obstacles are overcome, the teacher must enforce the following rule: If the student sings soprano, the teacher must help him to gain the high tones little by little (as the age permits), for an extensive head register is essential for a soprano voice.

Experience and observation have taught the Grecians that the human voice naturally extends through a range of two octaves or fifteen diatonic tones.





FIGURE I

In our time, teachers wish to enlarge the range, and by forcing Nature, they bring out from the human throat even a larger number of tones. Thus today, the tendency is to judge a singer's merits by the range of his voice. In my opinion, however, the worth of a voice will always depend upon its evenness of quality throughout the whole register and perfect intonation. The strength of the medium and chest tones must also be equivalent to those of the head, in order to form an even register. The medium and low tones are naturally more homogeneous, sonorous and pleasing, because they come from the chest, while the head tones are more difficult to perfect because they are more shrill. The truth of this can be observed from the fact that professors of counterpoint when writing for students the intervals of the fourth, the fifth false, the seventh major, minor and diminished, write them ascending, rather than descending. The reason is, that it is easier and more natural to attack the low tones than the high, because they can be taken with less effort. Great care must be taken by the student to attack the high tones with the required sweetness and proportion, in order that he can command his entire range to perfection. One finds many obstacles in guiding a student to perfect

intonation and it costs a great deal to some to overcome them. This is the place where one must pay great attention. The singer, being accompanied by instruments different from each other in pitch and temperament, finds himself in difficulty to know which one he should follow in order to keep on the right pitch. Everyone knows that the organ and cembalo are fixed instruments and have, outside of the octaves, temperate intervals. I mean to say, that the intervals are very much diminished or augmented below or above the precise pitch. The stringed instruments, violin, cello, and bass viola are in part fixed and in part movable. They are fixed in that the strings are tuned in fifths or fourths; and they become movable when touched by the fingers, that mark the tones which are to be drawn by the bow. The wind instruments are permanently fixed, but through the effects of the wind blown with more or less strength their tones are often altered. However, the skillful player through perfect breath control minimizes these defects to a point so as to become scarcely perceptible.

From all this, we derive that since the singer is naturally inclined to the exact and precise intervals, he always feels in doubt as to which instrument among all those different temperaments, to follow. To be sure, the singer will have to follow the pitch of the organ or cembalo, for although they are temperate and in themselves imperfect, yet due to their construction and the difficulty of bringing their

tones in the pitch with other instruments, they are kept as a base and standard for all other instruments as well as for the voice. In the absence of the organ or cembalo, the singer will then take the pitch of that instrument which has always served as a standard pitch, the violin. This is the reason why it is called the first violin.\*

It is to be hoped that the first violinists are endowed with a perfect ear, and that they will use all possible care and precision in tuning their instruments. Thus, they will avoid the almost unavoidable temperament, so that the singer can rely upon them with surety. It will be to every student's best advantage to read the book "*Opinioni antiche e moderne, ossia osservazioni sopra il canto figurato*," by Pier Francesco Tosi (Page 12). He gives an explanation concerning the semi-tones, major and minor, and the quantity of intervals or of "commas" of which such semi-tones are formed. He states as an example, that if a soprano is to sing Do-diesis (C-sharp) in the same way as Re-be molle (D-flat) that a keen ear can discover that he is out of pitch, because the former raises a little. We must then be alert in order

\*In the rare supposition (for very improbably singers will surrender to sing with an orchestra where there is not the organ or gravicembalo) it will become necessary that the instruments be tuned by means of the "diapason." The reason is that the professors of violin, are convinced that their instruments will resound better when tuned higher. Accordingly they follow this principle in tuning their instrument from which it results that the singer cannot stand it.

to avoid mistakes. Musical theory teaches us that the difference between Re-diesis (D-sharp) and Mi-be molle (E-flat) on the organ and cembalo is almost of two "commas." So if a singer wishes to be a strict observer of the fundamental canons of intonation, he must not forget to modify both, by raising the sharp and by lowering the flat each a little. Since we have only one tone for expressing these intervals, by the above mentioned slight alteration in the pitch of both, sharp and flat, we make the difference of the two "commas" as slightly audible as possible. This is the reason why intervals altered by sharps have a tendency to become raw and shrill and those diminished by flats are dull and languid. It is only through this very essential study that intonation can be made perfect. In other times in Italy, they used a kind of musical lecture so extravagant and complicated that it compelled the poor student to study many years in order to master the system. This method was strictly enforced. It was not only too heavy and painful for the student, but the great concentration required to master it took his mind away and he was unable to give the attention necessary to produce the exact intonation of every tone and thus it led him to commit mistakes in the most vital part of the training. The renowned master, Gaetano Greco, professor in one of the conservatories of Naples, was the first to think of simplifying the old system of lecture. He used the old one, too, but noted that his pupils

paid more attention to the lecture than to intonation. Impatiently, he would raise his hands from the gravicembalo and speaking directly to the pupils would say: "Have this tone tuned at the right pitch and call it 'devil' if you wish to!" He was so convinced that it was necessary to call their attention to the essentials rather than to the accessories, that he thought of an easier way for his pupils and abandoned the ancient, or more difficult lecture. He invented a new way which was as good in its fundamental points as the other and was also easier and less stringent for beginners. In short it sacrificed none of the things which art requires, and it made instruction easier and brought speedier results. It would be a good thing if other teachers would imitate Sig. Greco in always improving this musical lecture with new and easier methods, in order to be more helpful to the student. When the teacher sees that the student is sure of intonation, in the striking of the first note, and is able also to clearly read solfeggio, he must immediately start him in vocalization. Otherwise the habit of continually calling the tones may endanger the correct position of the mouth. While vocalization makes him sure in intonation, it also makes the voice agile and flexible and accustoms it to call and render the words distinctly.

In the year 1761, Haffe, alias Saffone, came to Vienna to write his opera, "Alcide al Bivio." One day, I was chatting with this composer about the

methods of lectures in music and he recommended one to me which he knew to be very good and one that he had seen used successfully by the Canonico Doddi of Cortona. I asked him to give me a demonstration of such method and Sig. Saffone wrote to his Cortona friend and procured me a copy with this inscription: "Demonstration for giving practical instruction for reading solfeggio in every musical key with a single lecture."

|   |    |    |  |     |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|--|-----|----|----|----|
| <div> <div># Pa</div> <div>b# Bo</div> </div> |    |    | <div> <div># Tu</div> <div>b# De</div> <div>b# No</div> </div> |     |    |    |    |
| UT  | RE | MI | FA   | SOL | LA | SI | UT |
| C.  | D. | E. | F.   | G.  | A. | B. | C. |

#### EXAMPLE

The first seven syllables\* or monosyllables described on the seven white keys of the gravicembalo, are for the diatonic or natural scale. Now, if one wishes to perform a scale for the soprano or contralto voice, one must start from Do (C) below the staff and repeat this octave by octave, according to the quality

\*The author of this new method of Sol-Fa-ing is the noble Chev. Marquis Fulvio Chigo Zondolari of Siena, who published the following book: "Reflections made by Euchero Chepherd of

and range of the voice which is singing. For a tenor or a bass voice, he must start the scale on Do (C) an octave lower than the one used for female voices, and there too, extend the octaves up and down according to the range of each voice. With these tones any of the so-called scales with natural intervals can be formed, as one finds on the white keys of the cembalo, from seven to seven tones, in the ascending or descending progression as followed by the French lecture, int. Ut-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Si-; repeating in this way in ascending as well as descending, until they reach that tone which marks the limit of each voice, soprano, alto, tenor and bass. With these twelve monosyllables, it is possible to Sol-fa musical compositions for the voice, as well as for playing with sharps and flats written in key or accidentals, provided that they are written according to the rules of harmony. The important thing is this: That invariably upon that determined key of the cembalo whether it be natural, chromatic or inharmonic (if the latter is used) there is always the same monosyllable written that has been assigned to it. This is to help the

Arcadia, over the more easy way of learning how to sing with a solfeggio of twelve monosyllables," Venice, by Carlo Pecora, 1746, in 4. This distinguished Chev. and famous musician having made a musical collection of the best music writers of his time, he devoted himself to discover a new and easier method, and he decided to publish it under the name of an Arcadian, being too modest to allow his own name to be made known. Now that he has been dead for some years it is right to make him known to the public.

student to memorize the exact pitch of the sound of that key. By this, it is made plain that the first thing for the student to do is to learn to know the keyboard of the cembalo and the tones corresponding to his voice. For instance, the teacher informs him that the same half tone used to express the sharp of Do (C) is the same used to express the flat of Re (D) and in both cases, the sharp and flat must be called "Pa" and so on for the other semitones. After the student has learned to master the first natural scale, he may then pass to the exercise of the intervals of thirds, fourths, etc., following them with the scales formed of tones and semitones. All these exercises must be applied according to the wisdom of the teacher, and to the musical accomplishments on the part of the student. There is no strict necessity for using the same exercises, for one may modify these at will. This method will help the student in mastering the easy as well as the difficult exercises. To make this method plainer and to ratify the given reason for the invariable use of this way of Sol-Fa-ing, I will add, that if to the notes Fa (F) and Do (C) a flat shall be given, or if to the tones Mi (E) and Si (B), it happens to have a double sharp, then this note must be read with the monosyllable which corresponds to the key and which has been given to it, which must express flat or double flat or double sharp. For instance, when the double sharp is on Fa (F) in passing from the Fa-diesis (F-sharp) to form the Fa-doppio diesis, (F-double sharp) on the Sol (G), the name of that



tone shall be Sol (G), because this is the name given to that key that corresponds to that note and so for the flats, natural tones and accidentals. In my opinion, this new way of Sol-Fa-ing is very easy and is also a very clever invention. For after a student has once learned the natural octave, he has then only to study the other five monosyllables used for the sharps and flats. This will be easy because the black keys of the cembalo will make it plain for him to master them. In Germany they follow the same way of Sol-Fa-ing, using syllables of their own language. I have tried this innovation myself and found it very good and easy, and for this reason have given it a clear explanation here for the benefit of the young student. I do not presume that this is the best way, but I will leave it to be decided by the experts. The essential point to never lose sight of in this method as in all the other methods of Sol-Fa-ing, is for the teacher to be a rigid observer that every tone is perfectly pitched at the right key. Sig. Manfredini, author of "*Regole Armoniche*," (previously mentioned) has expressed his opinion concerning this method on pages five and six of his book and indulges himself in a criticism upon the above mentioned way of reading music. What foundation or reasons he had for giving such statements will be shown. In talking of the natural tones he gives this sentence: "*Octavus itaque sonus similis est primo.*" This principle is well known to every professor and to all beginners. He goes further on and says: "The

other five tones that on the cembalo are placed between those of the octave do not enter into the quality of the tone; they don't even occupy a diverse place on the lines or spaces, and a simple sign of sharp or flat is enough to make them known. So they do not need a different name, and if it were necessary, one would not be enough for each key; but two would be necessary, one for the Do-diesis (C-sharp) and one for Re-be-molle (D-flat). These two tones are totally different, although they are not such on the cembalo. Furthermore, if the semitones are to be called with the names of Pa-Bo-Tu, etc., how shall we call the Si-diesis (B-sharp) and Mi-diesis (E-sharp), that in harmony are sounds no less important." He pretends for instance: "The Mi-diesis we shall call Fa, because it is a Fa on the cembalo. But here is where the mistake occurs. It is true the Mi-diesis becomes a Fa on the cembalo, because such an instrument has no other key to express it, but it is also true that Mi-diesis is not quite the same as Fa; and in fact where we have Mi-diesis, we cannot have Fa and vice versa. The same happens also on the tones which are not natural and especially is this true in the case of Fa-doppio-diesis (F-double sharp); it must not be called Sol, as Mancini says on page sixty of his book, but as it is a true Fa in harmony and occupies that place on the staff, it must simply be called Fa, and it is only through expressing it that it shall be raised half or a tone, as it shall be marked by the accident. It would then seem to me that the

above mentioned lecture is not at all necessary nor good. While the famous Guido Aretino invented the six syllables Ut-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol and La, the syllable Ut was a very unfavorable vowel to sing. And the same is true of Pa and Tu, which are not suited for forming good tones."

So far, the things the author cited as faults are unworthy of mention, because they are too well known to be exposed as a novelty or something new. If he had wished to be the creator of something new, he could have invented a new cembalo or organ, or some other instrument not defective. Since he has not done so, he might have left those instruments in peace and contentment, which though not perfect, yet serve as a base and rule for the training of many voices and the tuning of many other instruments. To obliterate the criticism of the above mentioned author, and to disclose its inconsistency, concerning the sharps and flats, let us reflect a little upon what he says. He states that these "have no place on the lines or spaces of the staff and consequently do not enter into the quality of a tone." Had he kept in mind the precepts of art, he would never have made such a positive statement. He could have remembered that the musical keys, when associated with sharps and flats, are called transposed keys. He could have reflected that the distribution of sharps and flats in the musical keys are not arbitrary but necessary. Otherwise the two semitones of the octaves would be subject to meet out of the prescribed intervals. The order of flats and sharps is well known to every

composer, so any further explanation is unnecessary. For the one who cares only to become a singer, it is not necessary to delve deeply into the mystery of the art of composition nor into the rules of transposition, nor in the effects produced, nor into theory, unless he wishes. It is enough for him to know the raising power derived by the sharps, the lowering by the flats and the effects of the natural, viz. Si-diesis (B-sharp), Si-be molle (B-flat), Si-be cuadro (B-natural). It will be sufficient for him to know that sharps and flats, when placed near the musical key on their lines and spaces, are called natural, and they are of value during the whole composition for every note placed on those lines and spaces corresponding to the key. The natural sign only has the power to alter them. Those sharps and flats interspersed in a composition are called accidentals and are placed at the left side of their note. However, this explanation is common to us, because it is described in the first musical rules and is commonly called the a, b, c, of music.

To prove that the sharps can establish a tone by themselves it will be enough to listen to the notes of the key of Ut-diesis (C-sharp), third major, Fig. 2, whose every note is sharped.

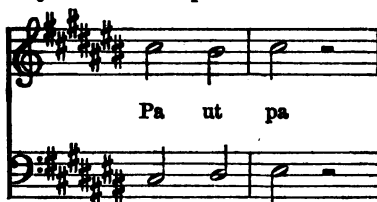


FIGURE 2

The same is true of flats. Take for example the key of Re-be molle (D-flat), Fig. 3, third major, which requires five flats.

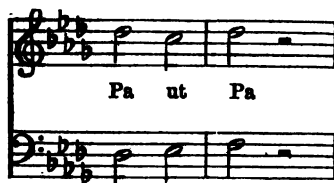


FIGURE 3

If then, these separate signs are necessary to establish a major or minor key, what reason is there to justify their exclusion? Let us continue. To demonstrate the infallibility and accuracy of this new kind of lecture, (and to prove with examples that we do not prefer to name the keys in this lecture, and as a consequence to help the intonation of each tone where it falls) I shall present as first example, the key of Ut-diesis (C-sharp) which you may observe at Fig. 4.



FIGURE 4

To show you also, that the same key serves for Re-be molle (D-flat) you have only to look at Fig. 5, and you will see that it does not differ from Fig. 4.



FIGURE 5

Enough has been said concerning the difference between D-la-sol-re-diesis, (D-sharp) and E-la-fa (E-flat); for this reason I expressly warned the reader in the closing of the chapter of my first edition, (which was so much criticised by Sig. Manfredini) by saying "The whole thing depends upon the teachers being strict observers that every note should be at its right pitch." Who does not know that the sharps are exhilarating and stimulating and that the flats are insensibly more moderate? In fact, although the Ut-diesis (C-sharp) and the Re-be molle (D-flat) are the same tone on the cembalo, they are very different arithmetically, as can be seen on the "Monocordo." I must also add that this arithmetical division so noticeable in theory, is very little noticed in practice. This is so true that if the teacher hears the Do-diesis (C-sharp) taken in pitch and later hears the Re-be

molle (D-flat) taken out of pitch, he has no other way of fixing the intonation of his pupil, than to suggest it on the cembalo with the voice or with the key alone if the instrument is perfectly tuned. Since things are this way, the tone corresponds exactly to the lecture and this truthful correspondence is what makes the lecture and intonation easy. If he will look at Fig. 6, he will see how the Si-diesis (B-sharp), can be called, following these rules. If he wishes to examine the key of Ut-minore (C-minor), Fig. 7, he will see that this tone corresponds to the same key as in Fig. 6. -

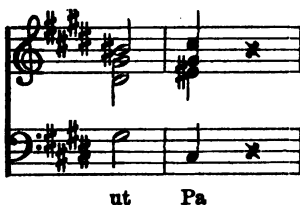


FIGURE 6

For Mi-diesis (E-sharp), although it is not the



FIGURE 7

same tone as Fa (F) yet it cannot spoil the intonation belonging to it, and it will be of help to the student to call it Fa, because it really falls upon that key, Figure 8.

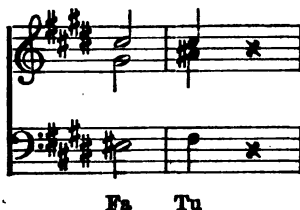


FIGURE 8

The same principle is to be observed concerning the Fa-doppio diesis (F-double sharp) and by looking at Fig. 9.

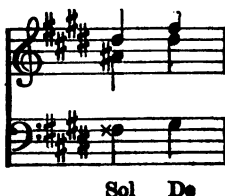


FIGURE 9

it will be seen that this tone falls on the key of Sol (G), and although this is proved, yet Sig. Manfredini wishes it called Fa. Following our rules which are founded upon the kind of instruments we possess and also upon constant observation, we must of



necessity call it Sol, since a different name cannot produce dissonance as it happens in vocalization. The student therefore can pitch Fa-doppio diesis, perfectly, by calling it Sol. Sig. Manfredini thinks he can defend his position by saying, "In fact on those tones where Mi-diesis (E-sharp) is, we cannot have Fa (F), and where Fa (F) is, Mi-diesis (E-sharp) cannot be, and the same is true of the other tones, etc." This declaration gives still clearer evidence of the virtue of our lecture. For he who knows what accidentals may occur on the tones of B-Fa (B), and F-fa-ut (F) etc., knows also that a Mi-diesis (E-sharp) cannot be in the same chord. From this it follows, that on the above mentioned tones the Fa (F), accompanied by its respective consonances, shall be to the eyes and ears of every one a clear and natural Fa (F). When singing a chromatic scale, we will call the Mi-diesis (E-sharp) Fa (F) also. By so doing, we will see that we bind it with its usual and accustomed accompaniment and consequently the lecture I suggest will produce a perfect intonation. I will never criticize the profession for having changed the syllable Ut, established by Guido Aretino, and replacing it by Do, although O is the one of the five vowels which is not good for singing, nor for the voice, proved by the experience of the whole profession. Although this lecture seems to be a new thing, judging by the addition of five new syllables, which fall upon the black keys of the cembalo, yet after examining it without partiality, we will find it

does not differ so much from the accustomed lecture.

Let us remember that the syllable Ut was not invented by the author of this lecture. He simply put it into use again. It was invented by Aretino. Comparing the other five tones which fall upon the black keys, I may say that the syllable

|          |                     |    |
|----------|---------------------|----|
| Pa.....  | corresponds to..... | Fa |
| Bo.....  |                     | Do |
| Tu.....  |                     | Ut |
| De.....  |                     | Re |
| No.....  |                     | Do |
| Fi ..... |                     | Mi |

It is to be regretted that this sytem has not met with Sig. Manfredini's approval. Nevertheless, it is worth much praise and the great singing masters who are in charge of directing their pupils in the art of singing, will find that instead of criticism, much praise is due to the profound and judicious Chev. Doddi of Cortona. It is generally known that not every vowel is equally good to pronounce sweetly in singing. Here it is demanded of the teacher to know how to exercise his pupils in that way he finds easiest to guide them toward what is beautiful and perfect in the art of singing. I close this chapter, which is perhaps in part a little too deep for the musical intelligence of the average student, for whom I have planned this endeavor.

I further state, that it is not an absolute necessity

to follow strictly one lecture rather than another. Every teacher thinks his method the best, and it is with this idea that I give mine also, because it is supported by long experience and by the excellent results achieved by other famous masters. It is not to be hoped, that we will have the same style of musical lecture as was established in MCCCL! The shapes of the notes, which exist, are approved so heartily by every European nation!

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCERNING THE POSITION OF THE MOUTH OR THE WAY TO OPEN IT

**A**S in my preceding articles, I have faithfully expressed my views, thoughts and meditations concerning the choice of a voice to be trained for a professional career, and also upon the method of instructing the pupil. I shall now occupy myself in this chapter explaining the rules for the position of the mouth. At first thought, this may not seem an important thing, yet it is one of the most essential points for the future success of the pupil. Not one, so far as I know, has treated this subject of training as it deserves. I, myself, have been able to decide upon these definite ideas and beliefs, only after a series of observations and many years of experience.

Before entering into the discussion of the true and proper position of the mouth, allow me to say that in many cases the teachers themselves are guilty of the defects and the faulty shaping of the mouth that I found in students. In regard to teaching; the first precept for one who undertakes the difficult task of teaching the art of singing, is, that he must not under-

take such a thing if he does not find himself possessed of a natural gift in this direction and the knowledge necessary to impart the instruction. Aside from all the other requisites of which it is not necessary to speak now, he must have the talent to know the defects of the pupil, which would keep him from reaching the goal. At the same time, he must know how to correct and eliminate these obstacles. This talent can never be acquired, except, after having followed the practice of the great singing masters and their principles, and to have had the experience himself; thus supplementing his own knowledge, it enables him to discern with more surety and clearness the way to guide the beginner to success. In every case, where the teacher has practiced the art of singing, there is no doubt about his being competent to teach others. However, it is not enough to know the art of singing merely to the point of being able to sing some songs with taste, mingled with some embellishment or graceful modulations, to make oneself believe that one can teach others with success. It is also necessary to be accustomed to know how to produce the voice agreeably, to open the mouth, to perform the above mentioned passages, and to embellish them with that precision that art teaches. Without this knowledge, the teacher will only *occasionally* be able to know the diverse ways and means necessary to be used with the different pupils; how to guide each of them to open their mouth easily and with the right proportion, and how to conduct

them to the correct execution of the above mentioned passages and embellishments. Above all the requisites to be found in a teacher, the one that should be considered as indispensable, is the art of putting his instruction clearly before his pupils, in a way so as not to tire them, as so often happens, and in this art, nature has been liberal with only a few, and these few have been able to attain it, only after long study, patience and time. It would certainly be fortunate for a student to fall into the hands of such a teacher, who is loving, patient and enduring, and who understands the student's nature and his ability.

As I have above stated, it is very important for him who wishes to sing to know how to open the mouth; because upon the opening of the mouth depends the clearness of the voice. I shall dwell on this topic and talk of the defects most commonly found; for by knowing defects, one can deduce the way to correct them. The first fault comes when one draws out the voice, without paying any attention to the mouth, and thus opens it badly. Therefore the voice does not come out clear, sonorous and pretty.

At first thought, it would seem that this fault is very easily corrected, but although this is the most common fault, it is not easy to remedy. The first thing that a teacher says to a pupil, whether in low, in high or in medium voice is "Open your mouth!" And he then thinks he has fulfilled his duty. But

he has not, in my opinion. It is necessary to explain, in a pleasant manner, to the inexperienced and rustic youth, what is precisely the right position of the mouth, relative to his physiognomy. The teacher must never tire in explaining, no matter how many times he may find it necessary to repeat, for this is the principle point,—“*Principii Obsta.*”

It is necessary for a pupil to know from the beginning how to open the mouth correctly and to open it by the rules of art, and not merely to his fancy. Be it known, that the rules for the opening of the mouth cannot be general, nor can they be made universally the same for every individual. For everyone knows that each individual does not open his mouth in the same way. Some have wide openings, some narrow and others medium. Add to this the irregularity of the teeth. Some have long teeth, others have broad ones, and others have small teeth. All these and other differences concerning the organs of the voice, compel the teacher to observe diligently in what size of the opening of the mouth the voice comes out clearest, purest and fullest. Thus he determines the size of the opening for the correct position of the mouth. Experience teaches that a mouth too widely open, or too close, besides looking badly from the aesthetic point, renders the voice rough and unpleasant. I am of the opinion that to know well how to shape it, can reasonably be kept as one of the essentials most important to a singer. Without this knowledge, although he may possess all

the other abilities of the profession, he will never be able to please, and will often render himself ridiculous and disgusting. The false positions of the mouth are many. I shall note here the ones most commonly found, and shall afterwards give the rule, which in my opinion, is the most certain to modify them. It has been observed that many pupils, hearing the teacher say, "Open your mouth," open it so widely that it looks like the door to a little oven. But if such pupils have the misfortune to fall into the hands of an inexperienced teacher, who does not know how to correct them, they will never be able to realize that from such an exaggerated opening of the mouth the voice will be throaty, and that the "fauces" being under such strain, will in consequence, lose that flexibility which is so necessary to give the voice that clearness and facility in drawing it. If this position of the mouth remains uncorrected, the poor fellow will sing, but always with a suffocated, crude and heavy quality. On the contrary, we find those who do not open their mouths enough, and give it a round form, and bring forward their tongue almost on their lips. This monstrous position produces three grave defects: First, the voice acquires, as we would call it, a mourning and dead quality; second, from this, it makes one sing through the nose, and third, one cannot enunciate clearly. The reasons are: In the first case, the tongue is not in its natural position and the voice does not come out clear, sonorous, because it strikes against the palate, and is thrown



back in the throat, and lies there suffocated. In the second case, the reason is the same one, for the tongue lying out of its natural position, compresses the air, so that the voice finding no natural opening, seeks its escape through the nose, thus causing it to sound nasal. In the third case, pronouncing the words with a thickened tongue, the enunciation will not be clear, but will sound mumbling and blubbing. There are many who sing with the teeth close and tight; this singing with close teeth, is the greatest of all defects. This position is a traitor to the voice, because it does not allow the tone to come out, nor can one articulate or enunciate the words. Now if defects of this kind are allowed to grow uncorrected, they become incurable. Experience proves that the opening of the mouth is what directs and regulates the voice. In fact, the resounding quality of the voice always depends upon the shaping of the position of the mouth, when there is the natural strength of the chest and a harmonious disposition of the vocal organs. Therefore, it will be useless for a teacher to correct the pupil by merely saying, "You open your mouth too much," or "Too little," or "You sing with your teeth closed." The general precepts are usually of little value, just as the practical applications are good. In giving the precise rules to a student, let the teacher not only tell him and explain to him, but let him illustrate his meaning by making himself an example, by assuming the different positions of the mouth, the wrong as well as the right position, in

order that the student may see and also hear the corresponding tone which comes from each corresponding position. The student will then be able to know and choose which is the correct one and why, through both seeing and hearing. Let the experienced teacher follow this method and he will soon be convinced how much more preferable are practical demonstrations to general rules. As for myself I always acted with my pupils like a dancing master. I used to call my pupils one by one in front of me, and after having placed them in the right position, I was telling them, "Boy, look . . . raise your head . . . don't lean it on the chest . . . no . . . not in the back either . . . there, that's right. Straight and natural." "In that position your vocal organs remain relaxed and flexible; because if you lean your head forward on to your chest your side muscles of the neck are tense, and they are also tense if you lean your head back." If the pupils opened their mouths incorrectly, I would show them how to do it right; and by many practical demonstrations, I have finally fixed a general rule which I will give here. This is: every pupil must shape his mouth for singing, just as he shapes it when he smiles. The upper teeth show a little, and are slightly separated from the lower ones. With many proofs and still more examples and much patience, I always obtained the desired result of discovering the necessary execution of such a rule. Besides it is very easy, and in conformity with the methods of the best schools. Let the

teachers follow this method with their pupils and I dare to promise them the most satisfactory results. In giving them these practical demonstrations, they can emphasize still more the truths of these rules by making their pupils pronounce the five Italian vowels A-HA, E-A, I-E, O-OH, U-OO. With the above indicated position of the mouth, they will see that this position is not changed in going from one vowel to the other, except in pronouncing O and U.\* In pronouncing the O, it causes only an almost invisible change inside of the mouth, while in the vowel U, one must protrude the lips gently and in a rounded mould, without disturbing the natural position of the mouth and to avoid all grimaces. We must not think from this, that the mouth must be deprived of the needed movement so convenient and necessary, not only to enunciate clearly, but also to clarify the voice to the point that art teaches. Here is the

\*Sig. Manfredini does not cease, although unjustly to assail me, whenever he thinks he has a chance. Even on the vowels he attacks me just as if I did not know the difficulty of pronouncing the vowel "I" in singing. That I agree with him whenever the singer ignores the rules of art. Art teaches, and the experience of many years has taught me plainly, that in forwarding the mouth too much and arching it too much in pronouncing the vowel "I" in singing, gives a dull, lifeless sound and not agreeable at all; while on the contrary, by keeping the mouth in the shape of a composed smile, we have as a result gracefulness and sweetness which are so necessary to pronounce the "I." Under these conditions, it gives delight to the hearer. Upon this point the singers and professors of our art will tell you if I am right or not.

important point: The teacher must observe in which position the voice of the pupil comes out best, and have him practice in that position, in order that he or she may take advantage of all the natural gifts and bring them all in to play.

For a student's best advantage, he must accustom himself from the very beginning to call all the tones in Sol-Fa-ing do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-si-do, and he must emphasize still more this principle when he passes to vocalize in the clear and true position. He must also distinguish those vowels which are pronounced sometimes broadly and sometimes narrowly, as the word requires. He should be careful not to make contortions with his mouth and thus make himself look convulsed, and much less make contortions with his body, like some singers, who in reaching a high tone, stand on their toes, thinking this will help them. Instead it makes them appear ridiculous, and they acquire unmendable habits. With this position of the mouth, it is necessary that the throat act in harmony also; and to explain myself still more clearly, I may say that the throat must unfold the voice with a light movement, and also clarify each vowel, not only in enunciating, but also in fixing it for the execution of any other passage. What is commonly called "throaty singing," or a voice which sounds raw and suffocated, is caused because the singer does not draw or sustain the voice by the natural strength of the chest, but thinks he will obtain a good result by tightening the "fauces." He is mistaken and he

must keep it as a truth, that this practice not only is insufficient to correct the voice, but is harmful, for the reason that the "fauces," as I demonstrated in Chapter III, are a part of the organs of voice. The voice cannot come out natural and spontaneous, if it finds the fauces in a forced position, which impedes natural action. Therefore the student must take the trouble to accustom his chest to give the voice with naturalness, and to use the "fauces" very lightly. If the harmony of these two parts, the mouth and the "fauces" is perfect, then the voice will be clear and harmonious. But if these organs act discordantly, the voice will be defective, and consequently the singing spoiled.

Now, if the faulty position of the mouth, as I said, mars the beauty and expression of the voice, how much more will it spoil the amiable features of the singer? features which are exposed at that moment to a public which is there ready to praise or to censure him. My dear young students, you will know when you have reached the age of maturity, and are stepping from one theatre to another, to how many vicissitudes one of our profession is exposed. The reflections that today seem little, will then prove large and you must know them. Your teacher must therefore have intuition, patience. . . . and lots of it, . . . and industry in correcting you when you acquire harmful habits. I have no doubt that any teacher, when a student fails to open the mouth, or draw the voice out clear, will at once tell him, "That

is not the position of the mouth that I taught you. That portion of the voice is nasal." I am sure that such a light and superficial correction is not enough to make a student see his error, nor to make him comprehend how he fails in it. The easiest way, and the one by which I have had good results, is to give the student the evidence of his error, and to this end, he must faithfully reproduce himself the defect of the student. He will then know plainly the error of singing in the nose, or in the throat, or with crude voice and dragging. Hearing the teacher reproducing his own faults, and seeing him making an exact caricature of himself, enlightens him. He will then remark, confess and condemn those errors, which he would never have remarked, confessed nor condemned in himself. In order to not have you believe that this idea of imitating the pupil's fault is mine, or of the teachers of our day, I must call your attention to the rule practiced in Rome by the celebrated masters Fedi, mentioned in my second chapter. The student does not only correct the defects of the voice through the teacher's exposition, but also all the other defects. Defects of this second kind are, bad position of the mouth, wrinkling of the forehead, twisting of the eyes, contortions of the neck and of the whole body, and things of this kind. To correct these defects, I would have my student stand in front of me and sing his lesson by heart. Such a position afforded two good results, one for me and one for the pupil. For me it was easier to observe

his defects and it was exercising his memory also. Singing in this way, it was easier to correct his faults, because his mind was not occupied in reading his notes, for he had them by heart. The practice of singing by heart is used only in daily lessons, intended for the learning of "Sol-Fa-ing" and vocalization. For the rest of the studying, the regular method should be used, in order that the pupil will become acquainted with every kind of music. If the pupil will sing his daily lessons before his teacher without defects, we can hope that he will be able to do much more in every other lesson. Thus having the good habit formed, he will sing correctly even when not observed by his teacher. I close this article, by recommending to the teacher, as well as to the pupils, the virtue of patience which crowns the work. Of the teacher's patience I have no doubt, but I do doubt the patience of the student, who thinks these details a superfluous and unnecessary work. They usually overlook them, and we often observe that the young student is easily offended and resents the reproaches of his teacher. Students, do not be so sensitive to the rebukes of your teachers, for these rebukes originate from the love and desire to see in you the improvement corresponding to the attention with which they teach you. Do not become conceited. Because you believe yourself to have industry, activity and perception, that enables you to correct your own fault! You are mistaken, these are phenomenons to be pointed out with finger "Albo Lapillo."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PROPER WAY TO DRAW OUT THE VOICE, TO MODULATE AND TO PLACE IT

**I**T happens very often that when nature has been generous in endowing some one person with a pure voice, she has on the other hand been less so in giving with it a nice body, sonority, strength and flexibility. A voice which lacks strength is called a "weak voice" and such a voice bars the singer from ever being able to make himself heard in a large place. A vigorous and robust voice is ordinarily a gift of Nature, but it can also be the result of study and art. The majority of teachers hold that the best way to make a weak voice strong and vigorous is to have the student in his preliminary training, to draw out all his voice. Every teacher makes use of this method in every case where a pupil's voice is weak, showing no discrimination. It must be remarked at least, that the quality and constitution of the different voices vary, as also do the degree of faults; so it remains, beyond doubt, that although the above mentioned method is a good one in itself, it cannot be applied in every case with good results.



This fact established, it consequently follows that each fault in the voice requires a different remedy, to be applied according to the origin of the fault. However, this chapter is not written for the purpose of enumerating the steps in the graduation of every faulty voice. In order that you may understand clearly and that you may profit by this discussion, (without its being too lengthy) I choose three types of voices most commonly found, and suggest for each one the corresponding remedy.

To one, Nature has given a robust, raw voice, harsh and shrill; to another a limited and weak voice; and to another a voice which though rich and of wide range, is yet weak and thin in every proportion. The last two types are usually called weak voices.

A raw, robust and shrieky voice only needs to be purified and made sweet. If you say to a pupil with such a voice "give all the voice," you will make it impossible to correct his faults. On the contrary, such a method would only serve to magnify and increase that irregular and raw flexibility. The proper remedy lies in compelling the student to hold the voice back in proportion to his age and strength, and at the same time produce smooth effects as much as is to be expected from vocal music. To this end constant attention is required in order to draw the voice without a trace of shriekiness, especially in the higher tones, and later to obtain equality and evenness in the entire register. It will be hopeless to attempt to obtain good results with any other than

these rules, because it is only by exercising self-possession and concentration in unfolding and expanding the voice very slowly, that one can succeed in eliminating its roughness and crudity. When the student, through this effort, arrives at a happy and sure execution, he can hope to enter the field of more difficult achievement.

The other type of voice, "limited in range and rather weak," although classed as being very faulty, can be corrected by devoting sufficient study to it. This voice is certainly at a disadvantage, since it can be used only in small places; this fact is in itself a great drawback, because we often find ourselves compelled to sing in a large place today, and in a small one to-morrow. However, in spite of this disadvantage, such a voice most certainly should not be abandoned. Experience has taught us that with proper study we can supply those elements which will render such a voice round and strong. The majority of teachers think they can correct this fault by instructing the pupil in his daily lessons to sing with full strength of voice, hoping thereby that he will gain in volume and strength, and invigorate the weak register. However, this rule appears to me to be very doubtful and dangerous because a pupil of twelve, thirteen or fourteen years, cannot have sufficient strength of chest to support such an irregular effort. I am rather inclined to believe this method is more successful when applied in cases where students have already acquired full develop-

ment and strength of chest, but who have been illy directed in their first years of training. In fact, it is very different with youths of tender age, as it is dangerous to use violent means on account of their age and strength. Guided by very long experience and practice in the means to be applied in these cases I discovered one which I will suggest here. It will prove to be of great help to a pupil who has a weak and limited voice, whether it be soprano or contralto. He must exercise with a solfeggio with sustained notes in his daily study. The result will be further assured if such solfeggio is kept within the limit which the voice permits at that time. It must be suggested to those who are confronted by these conditions, to increase the volume of their voices each day little by little, directing them thus, with the aid of art and continuous exercise, until they become vigorous and sonorous. When this first step has been accomplished the solfeggio must be augmented with high tones. As these high tones belong to the head register, I shall tell in my next chapter how to blend them. This study can never produce good results unless the voice is equalized and blended in the whole range.

If this exercise is well directed, steadfastly and faithfully used in the first years, his gain in strength of chest and his advancing maturity will enable him to better comprehend the judicious suggestions of the teacher, and he can practically be assured of success in gaining that quantity of voice which at first appeared almost impossible.

It remains for me now to speak of those voices, "thin and weak" in the entire register, which in my opinion are of almost no value because every voice ought to have good volume (as far as possible). Ordinarily, we find this type of voice very weak in the chest tones without low tones at all, but possessing rich high tones or head tones. If one can successfully enlarge and strengthen the chest register of such weak and thin voices, they will become good, pleasing and very acceptable. In my opinion, the only way to achieve this undertaking is to have the pupil sing in the chest tones only for a certain period of time. Practicing must be accomplished with a solfeggio quiet and even; and in order to further acquire sonority and extension, add to it deep, low tones. In addition to this, it is imperative for the pupil to realize that it is not only necessary to produce these low tones sonorously, purely and purged of all defects, but that it is also necessary to vocalize them with a very round pronunciation, and in a manner of repose both majestic and dignified. The point in all this is to eliminate the immature pronunciation that is generally characteristic of such thin voices. Once that this great difficulty is overcome, the next step for the teacher is to dictate a solfeggio mingled with tones of the second register (head), and as we find in these cases that such tones are already good, and that the pupil possesses the facility to draw them, the matter of blending the registers will be easily accomplished. One experience of mine will prove

the truth of what I say. There came to my school a young student who had been given up by two distinguished professors. Each declared that the pupil did not have a good chest, nor a good voice, and consequently he was incapable of progressing in the art. I examined him very patiently. From certain signs that experience teaches, I discovered some very good symptoms, and I conceived in my heart good hope. I undertook the difficult task of training him without fear of his lack of strength (he was of the tender age of thirteen). For a length of time I never forced his voice, but only trained him to a perfect intonation, and union of registers and graduation of the voice. Following this method for a certain length of time, and by his growth in years and strength, he improved continually to such a point that his voice became florid, robust and rich in its range and he was capable of going without any effort to the high Re (D) and consequently to avail himself of the honor of singing with success in all the noble theatres. I have improved many other pupils through the same system. If all had been trained with the same method I used for the above mentioned pupil, the same good results could have been obtained.

It is clearly evident that the rule commonly used, to teach the pupil to sing in full voice, cannot be effectively applied in every case. On the contrary, it is very harmful and undesirable in cases where the voice of the pupil is not steady and well placed. In the following instance it is plainly apparent that in

instructing the pupil to sing very loud, without using the art of producing the voice with moderation and graduating each sustained tone with that lightness of breath so necessary to place such a tone, he will not be able to perceive his fault. Singing instead, with moderation and great care, and under the direction and observation of a good teacher, it will be far easier to detect even the smallest faults of tone production, and consequently easy to correct them. This method, so essential in placing the voice, must not only be kept in mind, but it must be practiced when the pupil is already confident of himself in singing the scales and intervals, and in this way accustom himself very early to graduate and give the voice with all the rules that art requires.

There is the system which I declare is the only way to place the voice and that is to exercise it with sustained tones (whole notes) rendered with repose and taken one by one with due graduation. The reinforcement of the voice must follow in proportion to the age and strength of the pupil; and this advancement must be directed by the teacher who must not allow himself to be influenced by a desire to reach the final step too soon, but must go slowly, little by little, with the right degree. I cannot emphasize too strongly my former remark that a steadfast adherence to the practice of well executing and following the teacher in the path that he considers best for his pupil, is the only way to make the suggestive rules effective.

The defects that are natural and those that result from a wrong supervision can be remedied only by a long series of actions the object of which is to correct the natural bad habits of the vocal organs and those acquired under improper training.

Having so far spoken of the abuse in forcing the voice, I desire before closing this chapter, to advise you young students, to avoid a mistake which even the best singers have committed. It often happens that when opportunity presents itself to sing in a crowded church or in a large theatre, the singer deceives himself as to the expanding power of his own voice; he finds singing in a crowded place vastly different from singing in the same place when it was empty and when he could consequently hear his voice better, and thus mistakes the cause. This is due to the fact that the air is made heavy by the breathing of many people, and that kind of murmur always produced where there is a crowd; and in such cases he attempts to force the voice, expecting better results. This error contributes to mar the beauty of the voice and exhausts the chest. Experience teaches us that instead of forcing the voice in such instances it is far better to extend and unfold it easily and to reinforce it little by little and without apparent effort. This art is inferiorly comprehended, otherwise many singers would save their voices until a more advanced age, the age of singers not far from our present time. Thus, when a singer has tried his voice and has in many occasions found it sufficient

to fill a large place, although in some instances he happens not to hear his voice well, he must not force it, but he must be sure that he makes good impression on his audience. It is true that the same volume of voice is not the same for every theatre, but after many practical experiences he will learn how to regulate the regular proportion of voice for every place. Although a singer finds his voice not sufficient for a large place, he must never force it. Let it be known that to force a voice will always be one of the greatest errors a singer can commit.



## CHAPTER VIII

### OF THE BLENDING OF THE REGISTERS, PORTAMENTO AND APPOGGIATURA

**A**FTER the teacher, through the above mentioned method, has fixed the voice of the pupil who had a weak and unreliable voice, he ought to start him in the "Portamento di voce." This is one of the most important parts of the vocal art. He should teach him this part very well and thoroughly. I shall further on tell what I mean by portamento di voce. I wish only to state that such a portamento cannot be acquired unless the student has first blended the registers of the voice which are in every one more or less separated.

I have previously explained and demonstrated, when I talked about the manner of knowing by one's self which is the last note given with the support of the chest, and of the first note that sounds leaning to the head. Nature is not the same in every person, so it happens that the separation of the two registers is in some more and in some, less noticeable; in some rare cases we happen to find in one person the gift of singing throughout the whole range of his voice in the chest register.

The blending of the registers must be effected by the strict application of the precepts of study and art. All the helps of art will nevertheless prove useless, if before anything else the voice is not classified to the proper key. Unfortunately, now and then, inexperienced teachers have ruined good voices of worthy students, and a good soprano voice has been badly tormented, by making it sing in the contralto register and vice versa. Art consists in one's ability to know what Nature intended one to be. When once the gifts of nature are known, cultivating them easily makes man perfect;—just as, when the farmer through experience has discovered the various seeds which are more or less suitable to the diverse kinds of soil. The teachers must be careful not to betray their pupils and the pupils to not pay more attention to the teacher than to Nature. If this point is overlooked, all the helps of the precepts of art will be completely void. Take, for instance, a student who has a strong chest voice, and head tones out of proportion, weak and feeble. In such a voice the break of two registers comes from C-sol-fa-ut (C) of the soprano and goes to D-la-sol-re (D) on the fourth space. In such cases the head voice is in need of help, because it is separated from the chest, and the way to correct it is to have the pupil at once undertake and fix in his mind in his daily study, to keep the chest tones back as much as he can, and to force the voice little by little against the head just there where it seems to be most unfriendly to him, and thus fix it and develop

it with the same strength that the chest tones have already naturally developed.

Here is where the student and the teacher both must be very much in earnest. The student's part is to keep that portion of the voice under control that is in itself robust and sprightly, and to render the other portion strong that is by nature weak. On the part of the teacher it means this: After he has kept the student for some time in this work and he sees that the pupil starts to attack the head tones with more strength and flexibility, then he must let him sing the chest tones with the usual strength, so as to find out to what degree the difficulty has been overcome. It may be the case that the blending of the two registers has not as yet reached an ideal in evenness, nevertheless, I beg the teacher and student to not lose faith, because I am sure in the end success will crown the effort, that it has diminished the pain and effort in taking the notes of so unfriendly a register; this is a good sign and by continuing such practice the difficulty will in time be completely mastered, and all the other tones of the voice will be benefited greatly by this exercise. This same rule must be applied also in the reverse of the case, when a student has weak chest tones and a strong head register, with the difference that in this case the head tones must be kept back until both registers are found to be even. Arrived at this point, the student will be glad for the achieved success of having the two registers blended, and with patience and

industry, he will then undertake the work that leads to the acquisition of the "Portamento di voce" (the gliding of the voice) so necessary in every style of singing.

By portamento I mean the passing and blending of the voice from one tone to another, with perfect proportion and union, in ascending as well as descending. The singing will be near perfection if the student can produce it without interrupting his tone by taking his breath perceptibly, because it must be a straight and limpid graduation that must pass, support and blend from one tone to the other. To help the student acquire the gift of "Portamento di voce" the best way is to make him vocalize with a solfeggio with the two vowels "A" and "E" and to say them even, and in the same time this Sol-fa-ing must be written with semibreves, distributed in descending style and regular intervals at the will of him who writes them. In this exercise, the pupil must avoid taking breath on the notes that raise in degree or by intervals, and take it only in the descending scales. In matter of solfeggios, few are the teachers who stop to think how diligently and skillfully they must be written. We hear, sometimes, solfeggios that are so inartistic and so unnatural, and so lacking in taste, that instead of giving the pupil delight, they'll bore him to death and spoil the good nature of the student. Let the teacher then be very careful in composing exercises, that they may be natural, well graded and modulated, and in case he does

not know how to write them, then let him have them written by an expert in the art, because this is a point upon which the future of the student depends. To make this rule easy for those whose chests are not so strong and for those who cannot hold the breath so long, the solfeggio should be written of only two notes in each measure, and they must be two "Minime" giving to it a slow movement, so that the voice may have time to expand; the student must not take breath between the first and second note. If the student can sustain these two notes without too much effort, he may be permitted to sustain three notes, but no more, so as to avoid weakening his chest. I conclude, that even if a student were found with a very strong chest, he must nevertheless be treated with the same precaution, and in order to favor the further development of the chest, he may be allowed to sustain the notes longer only when mature age has strengthened his organs of the voice. The reason the student is forbidden to take breath when the voice goes high, directly or by intervals and is permitted to take it in descending, is because although it is not always the case, yet generally the voice is lazy in ascending. Besides, this system is more appropriate to blend the voice. Practice under the strict precepts of art will clearly demonstrate that a student should press the first note a little, and through another precept, he ought to pass, without taking breath, to the second tone with the same control and with modulation. In order to obtain

a perfect control he will keep his breath with such an economy, and will accustom the bellows of the voice in this way, to support it, to graduate it, and take it back at will. He will then find himself master in attacking a tone, and will be able to abandon it, to take it up again, and also to take his breath without the slightest possible effort. I admit that this exercise will prove very painful and fatiguing at the beginning, but this same effort will enable him to sing with easiness and delight in any style of music. In this way he will acquire strength of the chest and ease in passing from one tone to another. He will succeed in fastening the voice. This will enable him to really sing to the heart of his audience.

Once that the student has reached the degree of sustaining and passing the above mentioned tones without taking breath, he shall then continue this kind of exercise, singing sol-fa-ing with agility all the time and using the two vowels A-AH and E-EH. With this exercise he will learn to color as he wishes any kind of melody with that true expression which is needed so much in any kind of songs. With this same exercise the industrious student will acquire the art of graduating and sustaining the voice and he will find at the end surprising ease in the perfection of the "Messa di Voce." He will also be enabled to take his breath lightly and without interruption. The teacher must add to this exercise the musical accent and "Appoggiatura" of which I shall speak more extensively in another chapter. I will only

say here, that the appoggiatura is nothing else but one or more sustained notes. It divides itself into simple and double or "Gruppetto." The simple is when only the tone is sustained (Fig. 10).



FIGURE 10

If this tone is sustained in a descending scale, it is called an Above appoggiatura and must be formed of a whole tone; if it is sustained in an ascending scale it is called an appoggiatura from below and must be formed by only half a tone. The double appoggiatura, "gruppetto," is formed with more than one tone and this also takes place in ascending as well as in descending, and consequently it is executed in two ways, as shown in Figure 11.



FIGURE 11

Both must terminate with the true note or fundamental. The value of the appoggiatura simple, must correspond to one half value of the tone that conceives it. In case that the note is of an uneven value, the appoggiatura shall then be of two-thirds.

The rendition of a perfect appoggiatura is not easy, because if one wishes to mark it too little or too much, it then goes out of good order and proportion and consequently becomes raw and disagreeable. The Appoggiatura, Trillo and Mordente in reality are nothing but embellishments of the melody, yet they are so necessary that without them singing would be monotonous and imperfect, while with these embellishments singing acquires its greatest splendor. With all this the student must be careful and use the appoggiatura only in "Cantabile" and where expression requires it. When these embellishments are used indiscriminately, they are abused. This is easily proven by listening to a singer, who, in rendering an aria, which demands great passion and anger, as suggested by the words Tyrant, Cruel and Heartless, would instead use a sweet appoggiatura on these words, thus taking the meaning and emphasis completely away.

The rule I have given for the appoggiatura is not general; it refers to serious music only. If the buffo (comedian) abuses it by exaggerating, instead of failure it means success for him. Although that exaggeration is not successful in the mouth of a serious singer, it becomes hilarious in the mouth of a Caricato.

E suon di man . . . con elle  
Vanno a ferir le stelle.



## CHAPTER IX

### MESSA DI VOCE

**N**ATURE has in certain ways distributed her gifts upon man, in a coarse, uncultivated and imperfect manner.

X The genius that creates, the feeling that examines, the taste that judges and the reflection that corrects and perfects, each have with the delicacy of art, and the exercising of the human faculties refined the gifts of Nature, near to perfection and made them capable of delighting the human intellect and heart.

In the vague and multiform specimens of animals, we admire the diverse gifts of Nature, distributed with great partiality and economy. The faculty of uttering sounds, has been completely denied to the dwellers of the waters, and given with generous hand to those of the air, which is the principal element in which every sound is formed,\* and with-

\*There is no doubt that music, especially the vocal, should reach perfection and grandeur in a measure as the accoustic can be improved and new discoveries made plain in the human being, exactly as the optics and perspectives have helped so much in painting. We still ignore the possibility of the inarticulate sounds of animals being made articulate, or if many small animals can

out which all Nature would be dumb. Man could not certainly expect, that the beauties and treasures of Nature would all be united in him. What ascendancy has he, compared with other animals, to make him think himself more worthy face to face with Nature? He would be pretending too much, to think he could sing like birds, even though the articulate sounds of man are already very pleasing and delightful. Nevertheless, following his own natural impulses, and cultivating his own gifts, through observation and study, he has been able to excel the most valiant and perfect models that Nature at first hand, has given us to hear in singing. The graces and beauties that the art of singing use to enrapture the human heart are: *Portamento di voce*, *Appoggiatura*, *Messa di voce*, *Trillo*, and *Mordente*, I have spoken in my preceding chapter of the *portamento* and *appoggiatura*. I will gradually talk of the others, starting with the *Messa di voce*. *Messa di voce*, is that art in which the singer gives to any sustained note its graduation, starting it with almost a thread of voice and then reinforcing it proportionately to the greatest power in which it can be developed, and then takes it back with the same gradua-

produce any sounds at all. When some genius inventor will have taught us to arm our ear, not only these things will perhaps be discovered, but we shall acquire many other pleasant inventions, just as through the magnifying glass we know of the existence of many lives which are very small and almost invisible, and which abide in many other bodies.

tion that has been used in going from soft to loud.



FIGURE 12

This messa di voce is ordinarily used at the beginning of an "Aria Cantabile" or on a crowned note, and is also used to prepare for a cadenza. However, a real true artist uses it on any sustained or crowned tone which he finds interspersed in any composition. The "Messa di voce" enriches the singing, because it makes it more agreeable to the ear. If this is perfectly executed, by uniting the trill to it, it makes the cadenza and the singer perfect. For when he has made himself capable of sustaining and graduating the agility of his voice without effort or defects, he not only knows the secret of the art, but he possesses the art itself. Indeed, it is to be deplored that modern singers, knowing what valuable results are obtained from these rules, are not only careless about them, but are forgetting them as a useless thing. However, in order to be able to say they are followers of these rules, some start the "Messa di voce" but they are promptly deceived when they notice that the audience is not paying any attention, and that it gives signs of disapproval, in listening to a forced voice, without art and graduation (the two things which go together in messa di voce), with no

beginning, no medium or ending of it! There is also another kind of deception for these singers, who try to use the rules of *messa di voce*. This deception is an allurement and flattery. They think they possess it but when they start to perform it, they show that they have not even studied it. As soon as they have started the badly formed tone, they introduce into it, a multitude of other tones, but as they do not know how to hold the breath back, they are incapable of sustaining it, and consequently are compelled to end the *cadenza* without the trill and final note. This in my opinion, is the most unforgivable mistake, because it is born from irreflection and rashness. If such a singer had, before undertaking to perform the "*Messa di voce*" sized up his strength and studied well the rules, prescribed by our great masters, he certainly would only have undertaken what he could execute easily and with security. This abuse is already too grown-up and out of proportion in the students of these days, so that I fear my suggestions will not be enough to eradicate the evil. Besides there are to-day very few teachers who know the exact rules, ways and means to teach the *messa di voce* successfully.

I have already explained in my preceding articles the art of making the chest strong and fitted to any kind of singing. I will now tell the way in which the students must practice to conquer and possess the *messa di voce* with naturalness, and how to render it perfect in every detail. I insist that the student must

not presume to be able to execute the messa di voce, before he has acquired the art to hold, reinforce, and take the breath back, because, upon this depends whether he is able to give the start, and to graduate the voice proportionately in value, and to retire it without apparent effort. . I then will say, that if the student wishes to conceive the messa di voce without defects, it will be necessary for him to not push his breath violently, but to start it very quietly. Furthermore, he must economize the breath, by producing it in small degrees, so that in this way, he will be able to graduate the first tone with more security, by taking it in low voice, and increasing it to his full strength of loudness. From there, start to retire it with the same degree in which he developed it. In this way, he will find it easy to sustain the tone from the beginning to the end, and will avoid that inconvenience which usually happens to singers, of finding themselves exhausted at the end of the tone. When one starts a tone with so much impetus of breath, the voice goes sharp at the beginning of the tone, and flattens at the end of it, producing the most disagreeable effect upon the listener. There is no doubt, but that at the beginning the student will find very great difficulty in the ascending and descending of the voice in the intervals that are not regular, but this difficulty will be greatly lessened, if he fixes his mouth well. At the beginning of the tone, the mouth should be but slightly open, thus helping to draw the voice in its

sweeter and softer quality. Then gradually reinforce the tone, by opening the mouth as wide as the rules of art prescribe. I wish to warn the student to undertake the study of "Messa di voce" with the greatest care, otherwise he will run the risk of tiring his chest. This study should be practiced daily, and many intervals of rest should be allowed in the practice. I have been talking rather too long upon this topic. But, dear students, I am so fond of this subject, that I could talk of it all the time and never tire. I close by putting before you a famous example. I wish to cite the case of the valiant and noble-hearted Chev. Don Carlo Broschi, alias Farinello, who, besides possessing all the graces and embellishments of the art of singing, possessed the messa di voce to perfection; which in the opinion of most of the critics was what made him famous and immortal. This Signor Farinello, who can be called the glory of his century, was born in the then kingdom of Naples. From an early age, he found himself endowed with all the gifts of nature. His early study was directed by that famous master, Nicolo Porpora, under whom he made such progress that his reputation quickly spread all over Europe. His voice was considered perfect, beautiful and sonorous in its quality and unparalleled in range. It was perfect, from the lowest note to the highest. A like voice was never given us to hear. He was also gifted with a very keen and inventive mind, which, developed and educated in a proper way, enabled him to exer-

cise such originality and feats of his own in singing, that he was impossible of imitation.

The perfect art of holding the breath, and retaking it with such cleanness, so as to not allow any one to know when he was breathing, started and ended with him. The perfect intonation, the unfolding, the extending and expanding of the voice, his portamento, the perfect union of registers, the sparkling agility, and perfect trill were all in him in the same degree of perfection. In every style of singing, he was perfect, and to such a degree as to make himself inimitable. He was invited and honored by all the courts of Europe. This crown of success came to him in his early youth, but nevertheless, this great singing-master never stopped studying and he applied himself so much, that he almost discovered a new method of singing, and adopted a better one. He did all this, when he was in the midst of a blaze of glory, rich in fortune, estimation and honors. Now, if a man of so much worth never stopped his studying, nor the perfecting of his art, what should we do, who have not received from Nature one half of these gifts and endowments?

## CHAPTER X

### TRILLO AND MORDENTE

**T**HE most tedious time that one has, who devotes himself to some art or science, is that period that must be given to the study of fundamental principles and theory. I do not intend to discuss here how one can best entertain one's self, nor how to educate young people, because I direct my remarks to practice only, and shall not speculate about theory.

Let the indolent and those who lack stamina, say that the elements and principles of art are superfluous for the genius, inventor and creator, who can soar easily without them and fly high! Let such people say, that the rules and methods of our great ancestors are only the result of their narrowness and eccentricity! They cannot, nevertheless, deny the every day experiences and examples.

Did Virgilio, Tasso, and Metastasio, although endowed with sublime genius and ingenuity, refuse the studying of the elements and the following of the precepts of art in writing and composition? It cannot be denied that it is a necessity to dedicate many years to those elements which form the foundation and support of art.



It is precisely in the years of youth that the teacher pondering upon the ability and progress of his pupils can comprehend the good or bad disposition that will or not insure the success of every pupil. It is then that he will discover whether or not, a student is to become a great artist and a genius of ability, endowed with the gift of expression, or void of any gift of voice to the extent of being called a musician of tone and words, all given to expression and gestures. To those who take them into consideration, these signs are more visible in the course of a student's study, than at any other time. In fact, those teachers (whose reputation is clothed in doubt, because of the name of "ancient") were great observers and discoverers of these symptoms and never permitted their pupils to wander in their first years of study nor to lose themselves in the path of the diverse ornaments and embellishments of art. Instead, those students passed years patiently, in perfecting the intonation, in the exercise of insuring and sustaining the voice with firmness, in clarifying, strengthening and graduating it.

However, the trill, which is an ornament of our art of singing, was given by the old masters at the very beginning of vocal instruction. Even though the pupil was completely deprived of any natural disposition to it, those teachers compelled them to study it, in their first youth. Not because they expected them to perform and master it before any other embellishment, but just to start them into the prac-

tice of the action, that is to conceive, develop and master it. These students were started, very early indeed, in the perfection of the art, although it took many years to reach their ideal. To-day, this essential system is completely reversed. The modern teacher is too anxious to harvest glory and money, and in consequence, exposes his pupils immaturely, and makes them sing those difficult arias and songs of Caffarelli, Egiziello and Ferdinando Mazzanti, who were all great singing masters (and they were noted justly for their great art, for they acquired it by assiduity and a long well directed period of study, under the guidance of men of profound knowledge, judgment and ingenuity, gained by a life's devotion to art). What, then, are the results of this newly invented method? I will tell you. It produces the ruin of beautiful voices, which, if they had been mastered by the rules of art would each one be good and pleasing in its own particular style. However, being loaded with a weight for which they are not trained to endure, they will sing but with poor voice, poor execution and lacking that strength which can be acquired only by time and practice. In such cases, we hear these remarks by the public: "This voice is not good; it has no agility or strength and yet he wishes to sing light music." "This other singer has no trill, neither a good chest." "This one might be enduring, but goodness, he sings through his nose!" Yet these teachers, so long as they make good money, care little for all the rest. Consequent-

ly, the success of the modern students cannot be any better, because raised and taught without those prime elements of the art, and without graded method they can but perform the graces and embellishments imperfectly, and in a poor counterfeited way. Among the embellishments, is the bad trill mentioned by Sig. Manfredini, in his book. Yet at one time all these embellishments were the admiration, glory and celestial enjoyment of all audiences, and they added splendor to our singing. However, in the mouth of the modern artists, these graces become tiresome and one listens to them with more pity than pleasure. We must not think that it is an easy task to correct a voice, which was not directed well in its first years. I trust that the modern teacher, enlightened by the sad consequences of many examples will in the future, for the sake of the voices intrusted to him, imitate the examples of the old schools. I have followed them explicitly and found them correct.

In the times past, it was believed that if the trill was not given by Nature, it could not be acquired by art. I do not deny this, but may I be permitted to say that our ancient masters did not allow voices with natural agility to sing imperfectly, as we observe today. Moreover it has been seen in many cases that a pupil (even in the face of the most rigid obstacles met with earnest work) aided by the industry, ingenuity and indefatigable patience of his teacher, succeeded in developing and mastering the

trill. (I will bring up this topic later, quoting some remarks made by Pier-Francesco Tosi.)

Nevertheless, I will say that he who possesses the trill, will be in condition to use it at the right place and dispense with it in many others. If he does not possess the trill, he will find himself at a loss in many points of his singing, and consequently will harm his art in general.

I shall now dwell upon the topic of the trill, in order to encourage and help the young student to conquer it. I repeat, that in my opinion, the trill is the most important embellishment of the art. This embellishment gives to the ear and soul of the audience, the fullest admiration, tenderness, pleasure and love. For instance, take a singer who has a good voice, easy execution, good taste and refined style, perfect cadences, genuine passages and "Fermate" but no trill, and on the other hand, take a singer with only a few of the above mentioned qualities, but possessing the trill and ask the audience who is the better. How can you doubt. The second of course, is the preferred, liked and honored. Such an answer is given because the perfection and beauty of the art of singing is the trill. This practical evidence and opinion of the public are mine also. I can assure you that a cadenza, if only formed of two notes, supposing they are to be "Messa di Voce" and Trill, is enough. It sounds perfect and reasonable. On the other hand, if one goes directly after the *appoggiatura* to the final tone, without the trill, all

will sound languid and lacking. This opinion is so prevalent, that the singer calls the trill his "comodino" because he can use it in many ways so to suit himself. "Oh trillo! Sostegno, decoro e vita del canto!" (Oh trill! Support, life and pride of the art of song!) I repeat this passage of the first edition of my book, because I find it so necessary and important.

I am greatly surprised that Sig. Manfredini criticises me in his book. Most certainly I do not pretend to reform Nature where she has not been liberal in giving her gifts, but it seems to me of great moment and advantage to follow every natural tendency, although it be small. And I would call myself guilty, if I had proved careless in not inculcating this idea from which art derives so much honor and profit, as experience has taught me. For witnesses, I refer you to the experience of other professors of the art, and I also appeal to the common sense of the general public.

Sig. Manfredini says on page 7 in his book: "The trill must be natural and natural and then natural. To suppose that the trill is the most important part in vocal music, is to grant it an undeserved honor. The singing with portamento, the placing well of the voice, the purifying and spinning it, and the ability to soften and reduce it at the right place and time, these are the real beauties of the art; and the trill is only an embellishment which sounds well in a cadenza when it is natural. However, we can do without it, and not miss it. How many times have

I heard singing which touched the heart, and yet it was without the trill!" What can we think after such a mistaken judgment? I will only say, that one must live to hear such things. But I never heard anyone say before that the trill was not the most important embellishment and that it is only to add to the art, instead of being almost the foundation! An absolute opinion of this kind, as given by Sig. Manfredini, must be given by a congress of professors of the art of singing and not merely by one particular person. Had he read my book more carefully, he would have observed that I dwelled perhaps too long upon the points for directing the way to place the voice, and how to acquire the portamento, the art of starting, spinning, purifying and smoothing the voice. Do we not all know that all these things are necessary for a voice to be perfect in singing? Was it then necessary for Sig. Manfredini to come back and say before and after that sentence: "How many times have I heard singing that moved the heart, without performing the trill?" He could have said that this style of singing is admirably suited for those places where sinners meet for eight days to listen to the spiritual exercises. And above all, it would make an extraordinary effect after a sermon upon the "Universal Judgment!" Certainly, a poor voice in that case would be capable of causing tears to flow from the eyes of those penitents, and would inspire sorrow in those hearts already excited and inclined to meditation and pathos.

Had he said thus, he would have said well. In my opinion, such a voice was never found good for the theatre, because the stage requires all the embellishments. In conclusion, a singer must possess such a number of things, "an artistic variety," that when he goes to take a leading part, he may be able to succeed in any style and character he may be called upon to represent. So it is not the fear of harm done to me in the face of the profession, by Sig. Manfredini's criticism, that I have tried to justify myself concerning the trill, but rather because I have reasonably feared that his declaration would have an influence upon many inexperienced professors, who might overlook the cultivation and development of the trill in those voices which show sufficient agility to justify its undertaking. To see the trill neglected today, in spite of clear evidence that it is indispensable, can but cause us to marvel! Why is the trill neglected? Pardon me, teachers of singing! Forgive me for writing this truth! It is not the fault of the students. I know that ordinarily, when singers do not possess the trill, they say that Nature has been partial and did not give them the trill. In my opinion they are wrong, because by following even a slight tendency to it, with patient study and sufficient time, one can acquire the trill. This is the important point upon which teacher and student must help each other. Generally, when the teacher does not find in the pupil at once a natural disposition to the trill, and chest strength

sufficient to overcome the inherent difficulties attending its mastery, he grows tired and indifferent and loses interest in his pupil. On the other hand, the student becomes timid and discouraged by the teacher's impatience, and little by little loses all interest and hope of ever reaching success. Finally, tired out, he tries every way to avoid study. Teacher and pupil must try to avoid such extremes, which are so harmful to both. No art is taught or learned without assiduity and patience.

Some one may ask me to give here some precise rules that will aid him in the execution of the trill. A positive rule does not exist up to date. I can say I have heard voices that were extremely agile, which could perform any kind of difficult passages\* and feats relative to the trill (Figure 13.) and yet



FIGURE 13

not have the trill. On the contrary, I have observed voices of mediocre quality, which were yet

\*It is of these voices I am speaking, and I insist that the teacher should not disregard or abandon them. Had Sig. Manfredini dwelled more on my proposition, he would have saved himself the pain of saying so many inconsistent things.



gifted with the trill. So, I shall have to stand by the rules dictated by Pier-Francesco Tosi. This very learned man says that if a teacher is to perform his duty, he must avail himself of vocal, instrumental and speculative examples in order that he may aid the student to acquire the trill, with such qualities: Even-Hammered-Granite-Easy and at a moderately quick tempo. These are the most prominent qualities, which are admired by every composer and experienced professor.

X The precepts of art teach us that the trill is formed by a real tone, with the help of a false one in the major. The trill must always start on the false tone and end on the real tone. The false tone must be one tone higher than the real, and one must think it still higher, and both must be equally vibrated. When the trill occurs in the minor key, the student will see that it falls upon the keys of the "gravicembalo," two notes distant and only of one half tone. Although in reality there is but one trill, the multiplied figures used have caused it to be divided into eight kinds. This is exactly the way it is specified by Pier-Francesco Tosi, in his book, on page 24. He not only distinguishes every kind of trill, with those practical reasons which one treasures from art itself, and which are undoubtedly the endowment of the most valiant singing masters, but for greater clarity he gives each different kind its appropriate name. He talks about these eight kinds of trill with such accuracy that I could not but repeat the same thing,

had I wished to talk of all these kinds. However, I will not let the students depend entirely upon Tosi's statements. I, too, wish to give my opinion concerning the three most difficult kinds of trill, and what must be their exact rendition. Of these three kinds, the first is the "Rising Trill" (Figure 14.)



FIGURE 14

so called, because it starts upon a low tone and ends on a high one. The second is called the "Descending Trill" (Figure 15) because it starts on a high tone



FIGURE 15

and ends on a lower one. Of these two kinds, both must have equally precise and distinct graduation. This point is one of the most difficult of the art, because in going up as well as coming down, it is necessary to have perfect intonation. Besides all this, the singer must have already acquired the art

of sustaining, graduating and managing the breath, because in going in either direction, he must not only not interrupt the scale by taking breath, but he must also pass from one trill to the other with such pure and sure proportion, that the voice will not show any other change, than the passing, giving and taking back of the voice, in going from one trill to the other. These two scales of trills, when well placed and performed according to the true rules of art, will certainly bring great praise and honor to the performer. However, it will demand a long time and an enormous amount of work, before one will be able to reduce his voice to paste-like quality and to a happy and sure management.

The third kind is called "Redoubled." This trill when performed in its just proportion, with the art of sustaining it with the breath; and when one can give it that reinforcing and diminishing of the voice that is necessary to give to it, in its true form and appearance, it can be used by itself alone on any sustained tone or at some convenient stop, without the aid of any other passages or stop that would tend to prepare it. It will be its own simplicity that, will deserve applause and praise. We shall illustrate this: Let us suppose the tone C-Sol-Fa-Ut (C) in the third space. The trill must be started with *Messa di Voce* on the Do, and it must be guided to the true graduation which art prescribes. The voice must then be retired to the true point and then start the trill on the tone assigned (Figure 16).



FIGURE 16

The first note must form the *Messa di Voce*; the following one forms the first trill and the three notes take it away to pass again to the above mentioned trill. Attention is called to the fact that these embellishments must be joined together in the same breath, without breaking the voice or with caricatures of breathing, and one must retake the trilling tone with light and blended movement. In order to render the voice pliable for any difficulty, it must be exercised by reversing the *Gruppetto* (Figure 17).



FIGURE 17

This point of the art will be excellent only when it is executed perfectly. It must be undertaken only after deep, mature study and mastery. A good chest is necessary to sustain the first tone and also mature judgment to master the value of the *Messa di Voce*, in order to enable the singer to conduct the "Re-doubled Trill" to a perfect end. In conclusion, I say, whoever does not possess the gifts of Nature and art must not undertake to perform this kind of trill,

because undoubtedly, he will not be able to master it.

The "Mordente" originates from the trill. The former differs from the latter, in that the trill is composed of a true and real tone, which is vibrated equally with another note a tone higher, a feigned tone. The Mordente is composed of a real tone hitting a false one a half tone lower. This half tone must be hammered more slowly and with less force and value than the other tone. However, the trill and Mordente always end the same way, i. e., on the real tone. The latter has the advantage in that the artist can use it in any style of singing. The only thing it requires, is that it be used in its right place and in its just proportion. He who is fortunate enough to possess the trill, can also acquire the Mordente. And I assure him that in spite of the fact that the Mordente should be shorter and faster than the trill, yet he will acquire it, if he will exercise often with a solfeggio of agility, in the places where he finds the notes lengthened (Figure 18). He will then master this pleasing embellishment which will give as much delight as the trill, when one is done as well as the other—spotlessly and without defects.



FIGURE 18

I shall now talk of the defects and perfections of

the Trill and Mordente. Among the defective trills, are the "goaty" and the "horse" trill. The former is so called because it sounds like the bleating of a goat, and the latter, like the neighing of a horse. These errors are committed by the capricious and indolent students who rebel against their teacher's advice. Consequently, they leave the only infallible rule, that of hammering the trill, holding the breath and at the same time keeping the "fauces" free and relaxed. By this rule, one reduces the trill to its due proportion. Everyone will now know how the names "goaty" and "horse" trills originated, and why they are so called. I mean to say that when a singer does not make use of the "fauces" but only of the action of the mouth and opens it to the point and shape that he takes when he laughs, it naturally follows that he bleats like a goat or neighs like a horse. These are not the only defects of the trill. There are many others. Some have not the above mentioned defects, yet they form the trill in a way which is very unpleasant to the ear. Some sustain the trill slowly and languidly; others close and tighten it from the very beginning and change the movement now in the middle and then at the end. Some abandon the trill as soon as they start it, and others know not how or when to stop. This ornament of the art of singing requires not only exact execution, but also perfect measure, which the singer must give to it in any place he wishes to introduce it. When one deviates from the natural rules of art, the

y

trill becomes tiresome. Above all, the singer must beware of practicing by himself or in soft voice. Not only in the trill, but in any other embellishment, many singers find it very easy to sing them softly, but when they have to perform them in a large place, they cannot, or else they render them imperfectly and take away all the necessary and natural grace. Invariably all the ease that one shows in performing these in soft voice, will be reversed in an alarming degree of difficulty, when performing them in loud and unfolded voice. After the teacher has judiciously explained to the student which way to shape the trill, he must be satisfied at the beginning, to have him sing it languidly and slowly, in proportion to the age and strength of the pupil. Then while he is progressing in strength and knowledge, he will also be able to perform the trill with increased vigor and strength.

I recommend diligence, love and art to the professors, in order that they may never humiliate nor discourage their pupils. I praise the attention given by those students, who knowing that they have a bad trill, will not only listen to the advice of their teachers, but will go to hear the greatest singers and try to imitate and study them. No! No one should feel ashamed or humiliated in imitating and learning from great men in every art.

When a pupil possesses in some way the quality of a perfect trill, he must be careful to use it wisely and judiciously. It will bring bad results when wrongly

used, and it is still worse when a singer uses it without good cause, thus abusing it. By such treatment, it will not only become tiresome but it will tend to mar the singing in general. Use the trill where the voice sings, and its melody is repeated by some wind instruments, such as the oboe, cornet and other similar instruments. The long trill is effective when used in the final cadenza, because one has the chance to observe the strength of the chest and the art and work of the two artists, the singer and the player. As an example, I must also remark that if one puts the trill into a melody which has the "Siciliana" style, the bad effect will be instantly noticed, because this style and movement requires portamento with close blending of tones. Consequently, the trill would look like a caricature.

However, shall I talk all the time to the students and never to the singing masters? Should I never give a deferent talk to the professors? Great masters! You know as well as I, and are aware of the fact, that the trill is of great necessity to the art of singing and that without it, every cadenza remains incomplete and unsatisfactory. You also know that the trill is splendid, when used upon such convenient tones, which need to be enlivened or vibrated even though the melody be singable. A singer with a happily trained voice which can easily perform the trill can also perform the cadenza as shown (Figure 19). On the other hand, another voice well trained, which can give low and high



tones, sufficiently flexible but deprived of the trill, will execute all of the cadenza very well, except the Ascending Trill (Figure 19).



FIGURE 19

Such a singer will be able to prove his strength and art, and will be able to sustain the white notes (the half and whole) well. Such a voice will also be able to soar perfectly from the low to the high tones, with expression and exactness. Nevertheless, the cadenza will result lifeless and imperfect, because the ascending trill is what characterizes and gives its true dignity and prestige as shown in Figure 19.

Remember then, that the value of studying depends upon its being regulated with both reason and common sense. Both these virtues give us an even balance. I praise the artist, who, when he finds the place where both words and music require the trill, gives the trill and not the Appoggiatura. When the latter is required, he gives it and not the trill. Invariably, the effect will be better.

All things being considered, I will close with one

word. XStrength lies in perfect balance of knowledge, and in one's availing one's self of those graces and embellishments of the art, which are substantially the beauty of the art and the formation of a "virtuoso" style which distinguishes the master from the mediocrity.

## CHAPTER XI

### CADENZAS

**T**HE fact that I have spoken of *Messa di Voce*, *Trillo* and *Mordente*, does not exclude my talking on *Cadenzas*.

Before entering fully upon this topic, I must tell you that among singers there are two very well defined opinions concerning them. The first is, that a *Cadenza* must be prepared first with *Messa di Voce*, and that which follows must be a recapitulation of the song, in which the different passages of the melody are entwined. All of them must be well distributed, even and sustained in one breath, and added to them must be the customary trill.

The other opinion is that a *Cadenza* is a complete and arbitrary thing to a singer, so much so as to enable him to make use of all the various passages and tricks in which he can make a complete display of the agility of his voice, and of his particular ability.

There is no doubt, but that the first opinion is the correct one, and coherent with good judgment. A *cadenza* is only an epilogue to the song. The second opinion may be more suitable to the singer who, by a display of tones given in quick succession, startles

his audiences, who may prefer to be surprised by quantity of notes, rather than by an exhibition of art and common sense. This idea causes the youth to think that there is nothing easier than a cadenza. Many are of this opinion, but they are greatly mistaken. I dare to say that the cadenza is one of the most difficult things in the real vocal music. To perform it perfectly, one must overcome many obstacles. To prove to you that I am telling the truth, it will be enough for me to show you all the difficulties one by one. First, you must be sure and confident in modulating a tone; without this security, one runs the risk of starting the trill on a different key. Secondly, it is necessary to hold and perfectly control the breath. Thirdly, one is at a great advantage, if he is endowed with an inventive and creative mind. (It is this degree of intelligence which distinguishes the artist at once, and carries him to triumph.)

One can acquire all these qualities. Although a creative mind is a gift of Nature, one can acquire it to such a point as to be able to rank close to the one who is so gifted naturally.

The art of sustaining, controlling and graduating the breath, so as to be able to give the right proportion to the cadenza from the beginning to the end without interruption is the principal and most important acquisition for a student. This is why I said "common sense." Because it is that which directs and guides the singer to undertake those things only

which lie within his ability. Thus, he avoids exhaustion and the chagrin that he would feel if he were not able to perform the trill perfectly and reach the final note. This same judgment must help him to choose a melody in accordance with the Cantilena and sentiment of his song, and not to deceive himself by ending a song in "agitato," that is supposed to end in tenderness or passion. If this principle were not followed it would be certain that cadenzas would be guided more by fancy than by common sense.

Singers have a wrong idea, when they think they gain more credit by making a long cadenza. It should not be out of proportion, otherwise the singer by undertaking too much, will make it boresome. An intelligent artist will not pass the limit, and when he has to perform a cadenza, with a wind or stringed instrument, he will never exceed the convenient measure. *Good* united with *brevity* brings universal recognition to an artist. If one is to sing a cadenza, without an accompaniment from beginning to end, then the voice must be pure and clear of all defects. Intonation, which is the principal showing, must be kept in the center of the tone, even as the graduation of expression and strength. By this means the voice is given with that sparkling brightness from the beginning to the end. Above all, emphasize or mark the last syllable of the last word, to prevent the cadenza from ending in a languishing way.

What I have so far explained, is undoubtedly of

great importance in giving perfect execution to a cadenza. I will leave the details to the judgment of the performer, who must choose the leading movement from the "ritornello" of the song and by his own invention, develop on it all the required virtuosity that forms a well balanced cadenza. He can then be sure of scoring success and praise.

By constant effort, the studious youth can easily come into possession of all such advantages. Is it easy or hard to conquer the above mentioned gifts? We must certainly confess that it is very hard; and he who wishes to succeed must avoid none of the hardships, nor omit paying close attention to the well learned precepts given him by his teacher, and follow closely the examples of the best professors.

When a student has succeeded in fixing and sustaining his voice, he may start on a cadenza, but it should be a short one, in relation to his age and strength, and then increase the number of notes and its difficulty in the same degree as he develops strength. Continue in this way until the cadenza reaches perfection. A cadenza is a necessity at the end of any well written song. Even if the song is a masterpiece, it will be languishing and unfinished without one.

It is the custom in some schools to use a different method, by not permitting students to perform cadenzas until they have reached a certain age, fearing to harm their chests. This retards them, and has great disadvantages. In every art, one should

early accustom one's self to overcome difficulties. If all this can be done under the guidance of an experienced and conscientious teacher, then the student must obey blindly every detail of his rules.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE AGILITY OF THE VOICE

**T**HE voice gifted by Nature with agility, is the voice I wish to lecture about here. In fact, agility is a singular gift of Nature, and cannot be acquired. It is true, that many of our present day singers, believe they possess this gift, but the unhappy way in which they sing shows very clearly that they are nearly, if not entirely deprived of this gift. I propose to disclose the cause of this disorder, and to show also how to bring restoration into our profession. Having thought very seriously upon this matter, I feel that the only explanation I can give as to the cause of this disorder, is that it is either due to the wrong belief of present day singers, who think they cannot be successful unless they sing with agility; or else, it is caused by their anxiety for applause, which desire induces them to make an effort to perform some sort of agility at any cost; or the fault lies with the teacher, who, although finding no natural disposition in his pupil, nevertheless induces him to study it, and teaches him all the rules and precepts. The pupil thus forms the habit, and naturally believes himself capable of performing that kind of singing. In this case the



pupil's opinion and the teacher's method are wrong. The pupil is mistaken when he thinks that only agility can bring success to a singer, and the teacher is wrong in his belief that a person having a heavy and raw voice, can change it with study and make it agile and paste-like. Agility can not be perfect unless it is natural, and when not perfect, instead of giving delight to an audience, it leaves one indifferent. In conclusion, he who does not possess agility, should not waste his time in trying to acquire it. An experienced teacher will direct such a pupil in another path, and teach him a different style of singing. There are many ways to guide a student and make him a successful artist. However, if the teacher sees some inclination towards agility, he must start the pupil in it at the right time and take him only as far as his ability justifies, and at the same time, start to develop in him the style that is already forming. However, this part of the training should not be undertaken until the registers of the voice have been perfectly blended. Carelessness at this point would cause much harm to the voice, because the agility would undoubtedly be uneven where the registers change, and thus be defective in strength and clearness, and also out of proportion.

Every wise and diligent teacher knows that any voice which has a natural tendency towards agility, whether the voice is small or large, can be trained in a style suitable to itself, as Nature suggested. The problem for the teacher to solve is to know what

style is suitable for each voice, and to cultivate it accordingly. A teacher must know all the ways and means necessary to loosen and polish a voice which is just forming and taking shape.

I should not stop so soon if I were to explain here all the passages and runs which art suggests. However, I wish to say that among them one finds easy, difficult and dangerous ones. It is the teacher's duty to know which to choose for each pupil. Thus



FIGURE 20



FIGURE 21

by study and industry, the pupil will be enabled to master his own style. Some voices are found, which show an inclination to make a run of a scale of intervals of thirds (Figure 20) but are lazy in descending, and vice versa. (Figure 21).

If a teacher compels such voices to master a style unsuitable to them, I am of the opinion that by so doing, these voices would suffer considerably. If an inexperienced teacher thinks he could make such a voice master these technicalities through long study he would deceive himself, for the student forced into such irregular work would find himself without breath support and perhaps be compelled to give up his study. This shows how essential it is for the teacher to know the nature of each pupil, in order that he may be enabled to direct each voice in its natural path.

A voice which is lazy in performing an ascending scale, must not be abandoned nor neglected, and the same attention should be paid to one that is timid in a descending scale. When such difficulties have been overcome, through well-directed study, then the teacher must change the solfeggios by adding to them difficult passages, relative to his progress, and thus he will be able to establish any voice and make it firm and solid and yet free. If the teacher knows how to develop voices which show ease in executing runs of three or six notes, he will find them apt and flexible, and capable of performing in any styles. When such a voice is perfected, it will be able to sing

in varied and independent styles, with vivacity, which will be surprisingly brilliant.

It is necessary for such a voice to acquire a perfect trill and mordente, in order that it can be able to adorn or revive any kind of singing. This is a great gift, but must be used judiciously and with discrimination.

Every agile and flexible voice should be made perfect in runs, "Volatina." To explain, I will say that there are two kinds of "Volatina," each of which is executed differently.\* The first is straight, ascending. (Figure 22)



FIGURE 22

The second is retrograde or descending (Figure 23).



FIGURE 23

Either one, when not exceeding an octave, is called "Simple Run" or "Volatina Semplice." When exceeding an octave, it is called "Increased" or "Redoubled." (Figure 24)

\*Keep in mind that any tone that marks the seventh in the ascending movement, must be rendered a little increased or sharpened, while the same tone in the descending movement must be attacked easily and naturally.



FIGURE 24

Among the multiplex passages and runs which art suggests, I admire this kind most, because it is suitable and blends perfectly with a vivacious melody as well as with one of slow movement. As an example of the diverse ways in which it can be used, we see it used as an ornament to a crowned note "Ferinata," executed simply and straight; and if one wishes to adorn the same note still more, one can add the sustained and fixed trill upon the note which ends the octave. (Figure 25.)



FIGURE 25

Moreover, when the "Volatina" though simple, is used with the right proportion, it will serve to blend and give action and vivacity to the melody which follows. It gives brilliancy when used in cadenzas which end in tempo, especially in the redoubled run "Volatina Raddoppiata." The important thing is to know how to redouble and graduate the run so that it ends in proportion with the movement. We will now examine which one must be practiced in

order that it will result perfectly, in any place where one may wish to use it. There is no doubt but that the run "Volatina" has much coherence with the "Messa di Voce." In fact, if one wishes to respect the rules in performing it, he must produce the breath by degrees in order that he may expand the voice, when sustaining the first note which prepares it, and thus not use the voice with violence. The tone must be held even and the breath kept light while performing the run. This is called "Run prepared with messa di voce." We have also the "Single" or "Redoubled Run" that is used and mingled with other passages in straight movement. However, in this one must pay strict attention that it is always performed distinctly, clearly and well graduated. This run must never be interrupted, but carried through to the final tone in one breath. It is a general opinion, that in order that the run "Volatina" may be perfect, it must be granite and performed with all possible velocity. I am of the same opinion, provided that the execution is faultless! Although the rules in this part of the art are very plain and ratified by the most experienced singing masters, some, due to their not knowing how to support the first tone with the strength of the chest, and knowing still less about the art of graduating the breath, take the first note with unusual violence and as they are incapable of sustaining and controlling it, they think by closing the "faucets" (the lower part of the throat) that they succeed in controlling the breath and voice.

The voice placed in such a forced position can appear only heavy, because it is choked and closed in the throat and smothered in the palate. Thus a clear run is changed into a bad slur of voice, which disgusts the hearers and evokes pity instead of delight. In conclusion, a run and all kinds of agility must be supported by a robust chest, assisted by the graduation of breath, and a light "fauces," in order that each note can be distinct, although executed with the greatest velocity.

Every student must remember that this study requires a certain length of time and indefatigable will to master it. This time and this effort will not be employed in vain, because they will serve to form an eclectic style of singing which will be distinct and sublime. I am sure that a voice endowed with perfect intonation and a moderate tendency to agility, can with appropriate study master the above mentioned run. (Figure 26)



FIGURE 26

When the teacher discovers sufficient capacity in his pupil, he must not delay in starting him in a

sustained solfeggio, in order that he will be enabled to pitch the voice correctly on every syllable. This requires a great deal of patience on the part of the teacher, and assiduous study on the part of the student to overcome the many obstacles which one always finds. Although this solfeggio is sung in slow movement, a singer must not abandon himself to the point of making it sound languid. The intonation must be kept at the right pitch, to enable him to mark distinctly every tone. A passage executed with such precision will make a teacher noted and will also bring credit to the pupil.

Having spoken extensively about this natural agility, I now pass to the other styles of singing used and mingled with agility. One of the most difficult styles is the "Martellato" (hammered). (Figure 27)



FIGURE 27

This consists of repeating a tone many times, and of the four, the first must be a little higher than the other three, although they are all written upon the same line or space. This is very difficult to render



perfectly, as it requires an extraordinarily agile voice, and great assiduity and perseverance to master it. Before undertaking this style, one must have gained perfect breath control, in order that one may break the tone and retake it without effort. The intonation must be perfect, so that every hammered note will be distinct and perfectly pitched. These tones must be marked lightly and reinforced only where the melody (*Cantabile*) requires it, otherwise, if they exceed the rules of art, the "*Cantabile*" would resemble the cackling of a hen, when she shows the joy of having laid an egg. It is because this style is so difficult that it is going out of use. The last famous singers who used to perform this kind of agility, were Faustina Haffe and Agostino Fontana, pupils of Antonio Pasi, and the Viscontina of Milan. We have heard no one since perform this embellishment.

Another style is the "*Arpeggiato*" (Figure 28),



FIGURE 28

so called because such a combination of tones, one chord following another, is often performed on the harp, and thus the name, "*Arpeggiato*." Even though a teacher may discover some natural tendency in a pupil for this, he must not start him in this

difficult work, until the pupil has acquired the gift of a perfectly clear voice, purged of all defects and a decidedly flexible "fauces," in order that the "arpeggios" can be performed with the required velocity. A voice with this gift must practice daily a solfeggio mingled with bars of such arpeggios. In this way, he will be able to poise the voice firmly on the chest and in the head also, and with such exercises one can produce a perfectly united and even voice. In the beginning of this study the teacher must not only be careful in choosing the solfeggio, but he must also be very particular that the student attacks each note at its right pitch, and the exercise must be sung slowly in order that the chest will not be overtaxed. The teacher knows when the pupil is ready to take it at the required speed. The student can advance only step by step. When he can attack the first note and blend the following three, giving a perfect crescendo and diminuendo, then he is singing this "Cantilena" perfectly and according to the movement of the melody. To do this one must not break the melody by taking breath, for it can be rendered perfectly only by the insuring of the breath. This work should be undertaken slowly, so that the student will be able to stand the effort it costs the chest and fauces. When this embellishment is perfected, the pupil will be able to give the public a style so perfect that it will win universal admiration and renown.

Another embellishment is called "Cantar di

*sbalzo*" (Figure 29) (by leaps). Whether sung in major or minor key, it is always found difficult to master. A student should be examined to see whether he is fitted for this kind of agility or not. The requisites are a robust chest, agile voice having low, deep tones as well as high ones. If a student has not these qualities, he must not attempt this. "*Can-tar di sbalzo*" requires particular study, entirely different from any other. The intonation may be perfect in the other styles, but it must be studied again, in order to accustom the voice to leap from the low tone to the high and vice versa, with perfect intonation. Some one might think this an easy task, but he is mistaken. Besides the act of leaping with perfect intonation, it is necessary to have well-balanced control of the voice in ascending as well as in descending. Naturally, the low tone must vibrate and be sustained with strength according to the requirements, and the high note attacked softly, keeping always a corresponding proportion between the tones. This execution must be blended with a "*Portamento di voce*." If these two notes do not blend, there will be a break heard, which is permitted only to those who sing bass, or basso comico (comedian), who with these breaks and caricatures win laughter and applause. A singer of style may be permitted to break or detach tones, if he knows exactly where to introduce them; for instance at the end of a musical phrase, thus reviving the phrase and giving it an effect. In this style also, the most

important thing is the ability to hold and manage the breath.

The surest way to learn to sing by leaps is to start this study with whole notes. The first note must be perfectly pitched in order to be able to leap over a number of tones without taking breath. Do not force the high tone so as to tire the chest. When one is able to master this exercise in whole notes, then he may attempt the same on tones of shorter value. The establishment of perfect intonation acquired by the above exercises, and the art of controlled and directed breath, will allow the student to enter with more certainty into the narrow path of this difficult style. The intervals of these solfeggios, must not only be regular, but they must be mingled with irregular leaps of every kind, in order that the student may not find any trouble in the future. A teacher can determine by observation which rule is easiest for the pupil to use in leaping from a low tone to a high one, and to do it with artistic finish. If the teacher uses this efficient method, he must tell the pupil that since the first tone is placed in the chest and the second in the head, he must attack the second note with "*appoggiatura sotto vibrata*." When these tones descend from the head to the chest, then the high tone must be blended perfectly with the low one, always using the first tone as an example. In case the *appoggiatura* is omitted, what would be the result? To my weak understanding it would be very bad.

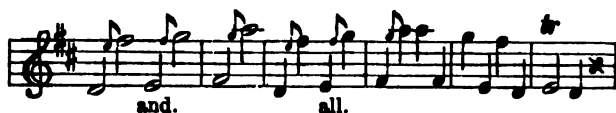


FIGURE 29

If this style called "sbalzo" (to leap) is sung without "appoggiatura vibrata," then the leap loses all its natural beauty and value. Anyone who practices this embellishment, will admit the soundness of my statement. We know that it has been and is still the custom for some singers to stop in a cantabile, in some places of the song upon some chest tones, "nota grave," then pass to a high tone with "appoggiatura," but it is also true, that the effect will not be so marked, because the speed of the leap is retarded.

We further observe that in the same style of "cantabile" when one is compelled to take a chest tone and pass on to the second tone a seventh, or an octave distant, without the "appoggiatura," and take this second tone with blended voice and without taking breath, one can produce an artistic effect (Figure 30).



FIGURE 30

Anyway this latter style cannot be called singing by leaps, but only legato singing, which is also very good when perfectly executed.

I must not omit telling you of a defect I have noticed in many singers, who have the habit of singing the low tones with lips almost closed and then open them abnormally on the high tones. The result is, that the two are of different character and color, each resulting badly because not started right. A singer must avoid forming a fault which has a bad effect upon the audience.

Great attention must be paid in studying this style, that the young pupil's chest is not overtaxed. Although the solfeggio is of vivacious movement, it must be started at slow pace. The best way is to vocalize with precision and repose, in order that each tone be perfectly pitched and pure. This well graded study should be regulated by the age and strength of the pupil. Only after he has acquired strength and robustness, must he be allowed to sing this exercise with increased velocity. Thus he will finally be able to unfold and loosen his voice, and perform the exercise in its required quick tempo.

There are those who are endowed with a voice so agile, that they can succeed in any style without study; however, if this extraordinary gift is directed by the rules of art, it is not only worthy of praise but of the highest admiration. It often happens, that these persons fall in love with their natural gift, and do not aspire to sing in any other style, except in that of agility. They do not consider that when they have grown old and have lost their chest strength, they will have no style left since they did not study

portamento, etc., etc. A teacher must consider all these things and when he finds a voice with such ability, he must not overlook the fact that the student should study all the general rules which are considered a foundation for every voice. By so doing, the student will be able to sing in other styles, when the time comes that his chest strength abandons him. Many think in singing a group of three or four notes, that the first and last only need to be sounded, and they merely slide over the others. This cannot be called agility, but is rather a "cantilena," (chanting) and is certainly in bad taste and contrary to the rules of art. On the other hand, there are those who exaggerate and hammer each tone with unevenness of voice and render the passages without distinction and deprive themselves of that gracefulness which is the result of the giving forth and the taking back of the voice. Consequently, instead of performing runs and passages, their rendition resembles the gobble of the turkey. Besides these defects, others perform a movement of the tongue, thinking they help the execution. Such means are stoutly forbidden, because a continued movement of the tongue, impedes the fixing of the required vowel, and brings into action a "nuance" of shades of other vowels which necessarily render the passage imperfect and makes the singer ridiculous.

In conclusion, every student must know that the beauty of every passage consists in the perfect intonation of each tone. Therefore, he must have the

right position of the mouth, and the tongue must be kept quiet throughout the execution of the passage. It is so true that the professors find great difficulty in curbing the tongue, or making a little channel in the middle of it, so that the voice finds no obstruction in coming out. Besides all this, there must be lightness in the action of the fauces, and the chest accustomed to support the voice, in order that the passages may be sung with vigor from the beginning to the end. Through this kind of study, the voice will be put into condition to support any passage of the sustained style and it will be able to make itself very agile in the execution of a vivacious movement and also able to mark and vibrate each tone, should the melody require it.

As I said in my preceding chapter, one must acquire through study the art to conserve, hold, save and retake the breath, with perfect ease. Without such an acquisition, no agility of any kind can be performed. In conclusion, he who wishes to acquire this agility must practice it assiduously. The student must not forget to plant the vowel firmly upon the tone on which he is to execute, in order that the beauty of each passage may not be impaired.

If the vowel "Ē" is not fixed at its true point, it runs the risk of becoming ridiculous; the same is true of "Ī" and "Ū." Ordinarily, if a singer is not experienced, he does not succeed very well in any passage on the fixed vowels Ē, Ô, U (oo). Our profession calls these forbidden vowels. I advise the



student, however, to practice on these vowels, as necessity sometimes obliges one to perform a passage upon them, especially upon "O." But since these cases are rare, the student will do well to practice mostly with "Ä" and "Ē."

As I have said many times, the skillful teacher must direct and guide each student in his own way, so that each can perfect himself in this very difficult style. He who is gifted with the trill, must not be timid in mingling it with a run on some special note, for this will brighten and beautify the passage. In the same way, make use of the "Mordente," which is a useful embellishment and gives the melody more vibrating power. In a "siciliana" style, it is just as well to perform the slur and dragging, if used in the right place and with the right proportion. One of the greatest merits for a singer, is to sustain the voice at the same degree. To do this, one must be attentive that he keeps the right proportion, which means well regulated high tones given with sweetness and facility, devoid of any harshness that would offend the ear. A pupil so guided, cannot help but reach that hoped for perfection!

Thus far, I have been talking about the rules of art. In the following chapters I shall discuss the education that a student must have before he is allowed to introduce his art to the public.

In closing this article, it strikes me that I would prove my sincere affection for studious youth, if I give them the advice given to me by a valiant and

loving teacher, a "souvenir" of the love and affection of the way he taught me to sing and which I shall never forget while I live. X "Never allow yourself to be timid; never be lazy; never permit yourself to be stage frightened when singing in public. One must have spirit, dash and life, otherwise everything will result tame and lifeless."

I know it is natural for a beginner to be timid, but the teacher should take care that when a pupil is able to sing by himself, to allow him to sing once in a while in public. First, let him sing before a few friends, then little by little, have him sing before a more exacting audience.

Remember that when I say that a student must have spirit, I do not mean by any means that he ought to be forward and show temerity instead of respect. Modesty in a good singer, united with all the other gifts of nature, art and knowledge, enable him to earn a serious consideration from the public. Never forget to keep self-possession while you are singing. Never allow yourself to wander, or to be careless. Since man is not always in the same mood, but will sometimes feel joyful and vivacious, and other times sad and lonely, he must be able to overcome the mood in which he finds himself, when the moment comes for him to sing in public. He must make an effort to cheer himself, and make himself pleasing by virtue, if not by nature. Careless singing is languid and uninteresting. Often we hear an audience wishing that such a singer would end his

song soon. On the other hand, when singing is vivacious and jocund, it gives pleasure to the audience and such an atmosphere makes both the singer and the audience happy and cheerful. Then we hear the cry "Bis, bis," (over again) and clapping of hands. An atmosphere of joy reflects more upon the heart of the singer than upon the audience. It makes his rendition easier, because he has gathered within himself all his thoughts. When his mind is in a happy mood, he feels like singing, and takes such an interest in what he is doing, that his mind runs always in advance of the following phrase, and it is just that excellent prevision which prepares him for the execution, and makes his rendition easier and more graceful and appeals to the ear and heart of his audience.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE KNOWLEDGE ONE NEEDS TO SING OR RECITE WELL IN THE THEATRE

**A**S I have said, it is not the beauty and agility of the voice alone that distinguishes the artist upon the stage, but it is also excellent acting that gives enjoyment, distinction and lucrative engagement. An actor recites well, when he lives the personages he represents so strongly, and exemplifies them so naturally with action and voice and proper feeling, that we hear the audience exclaim "He is Caesar!" "He is an Alexander!" etc.

An actor or singer cannot express passions and feelings nor transmit them to the public if he does not comprehend the value and meaning of each word; if he does not know and speak well the pure Tuscany tongue (Italian). Above all, he must have a clear, though not exaggerated pronunciation. My attention has been called to the diligence of the celebrated Pistocchi, who taught his pupils such clear enunciation, that they conveyed every word so distinctly that their audience could even hear the details of the consonants as "tt," "rr" and "ss." An actor

must know grammar, history and the Italian language.

The merit and value of a word do not always lie in its nature or intrinsic value, but often in the way of saying it. Perfect pronunciation is acquired by studying grammar. We must speak as we write. Even as a reader is misled by writing that is not punctuated correctly, so a speaker will be misunderstood if he is not careful in his use of the different shades of voice, pauses, and accentuations of crescendo. In grammar we learn to read, write and speak. If you listen to an actor you will hear many ways of poisoning the voice, varieties of shades, and many hidden powers which he brings in to play to express his feeling. Now he raises his voice, now lowers it; now he quickens his speech, now makes it severe, then sweet. It all depends upon the kind of feeling he wishes to awaken in his audience. After all, the rules are only theoretical and one must practice by reading good Italian books and by listening to good actors and orators. A very beneficial habit for one to form is to daily read a portion of a book in one's room, in a loud voice—poetry is preferable. By this exercise one forms the habit of making all those necessary changes and shades of voice, besides one learns to recite well in public.

After studying grammar one should take up the study of history, both sacred and secular, and classic novels. You will observe that singers do not spend their days in idleness, but instead they do much

reading. They read the origin of nations, the changes and revolutions of Empires, of wars and their truces and peace, and so on. Thus they acquire mature judgment. A singer is necessarily a traveler. It is enough for him to know the predominant virtue and passion of each nation, and its manner of dress and way of speaking. To illustrate: Suppose Julius Caesar was to be played on the stage. Take for example, the scene where he was betrayed and assailed by the senators. . . . . Would it not be ridiculous if the actor did not know how to show the particular greatness of soul and heart of such a hero? If instead of appearing with serene brow and fearlessness of heart, when he is attacked, he should play the part with meekness, cowardice or fear! Would it not be equally ridiculous if actors representing Mercurio and Neptune, should have the first assume the actions and manners of an old man, and the second be represented as spirited and vivacious? Would it not be laughable if in the sacred drama representing the sacrifice of Abraham, the actor should represent the part of that most obedient patriarch with trembling feeling? Suppose that in the resignation of Isaac, the part were played with resistance and tears? Yet such versions would happen if the actors were not familiar with history.

It now remains for me to say a few words about the Latin and Italian languages. I will not discuss the Latin, first because every professor knows how necessary it is in every kind of church singing, to distin-

guish well the long and short vowels; secondly, because these chapters only refer to theatrical singing.

In speaking of Italian, it cannot be denied by any nation that it is the most harmonious, softest and sweetest of the languages. For this reason, it can be adapted to any kind of music. In proof of this statement, read the letter of M. Rousseau on the French music, and yet he is a French author. When speaking of Italian, he means a very clear and perfect Italian as they say, "*Lingua toscana in bocca sienese con grazia pistoiese*" (Florentine language in a Sienese's mouth with the gracefulness of Pistoian people.) All the other dialects, although Italian, are not suited for the theatre, because they lack accent, and consequently have not that melodic sweetness, which is characteristic of the pure Italian. The dialects are not so adaptable to music, because of their broken vowels; one vowel will often have more than one sound. This is the reason why the French language is not so suitable for singing.\* It does not permit of a plain portamento or a clear and pure "*messa di voce*." It is true that not all who choose the art of singing, can come from Tuscany. However, any one can learn to sing who belongs to the states which form the "*Bella Italia*," as Bologna, Modena, Milan, Venice and the distinguished Neapolitans, many of whom learn to speak Italian better than the Florentine people, who seldom divest themselves

\*Mancini does not mention the English language, which is still harder to sing, due to the shading and vanishing of the vowels.

of the bad habit of speaking throaty. A splendid way for a young student to learn Italian thoroughly is to live some years in Florence, as many have done, and as I did myself; in their youth learn to speak it very easily as a baby absorbs it with his mother's milk, without school, art or study. In such cases, nature and age are the best teachers. I commend to those who cannot enjoy this privilege, to listen to good lectures and read good books, and converse with those who speak correctly. These three means are very competent to correct pronunciation and accent.

The necessity for a good and correct pronunciation was demonstrated in the example of those professors mentioned in chapter 11. Although those professors were in a large number from Bologna, Naples, Lombardia, etc., when they appeared on the stage they were all believed to have come from Tuscany.

The Divine Demosthenes appreciated the value of diction in an actor. Although he was proclaimed the first orator of Greece, yet this great man was afraid that the defects of his tongue might cause him to lose the name, reputation and universal admiration which he received from every country. So he took great pains to recite by himself in solitary places, keeping little stones in his mouth to loosen the defects of his native tongue.

■ I hope the above example will stimulate the young lovers of vocal music to not overlook effort



and hard work in order to perfect their pronunciation—a thing I value very highly, as it renders any kind of song graceful and perfect.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RECITATIVE AND ACTING

**A**FTER the Italian and Latin languages and history are mastered (the learning of these is so necessary for recitation), then the student must bravely undertake the study of acting. I do not know why this beautiful art is so neglected to-day, nor why it has fallen from that high standard of perfection it had forty years ago. A large number of our singers think it sufficient to be able to sing their part perfectly, and do not realize that recitative can not be successful unless accompanied by a corresponding correct action. Many others do realize the necessity of good acting, but excuse themselves by saying that the fault lies with the modern composers who write recitatives in such a way that they interrupt and confuse the true sense of the dialogue by the constant change of movements in the bass accompaniment! So, they sigh in envy of those happy singing actors, who have had the good fortune to interpret the operas written by Alessandro Scarlatti, Bononcini, Domenico Sarro, Gasperini, Francesco Mancini, Frederico Handel, Francesco Durante, and other famous men. To convince these singers of their mistake, it will be

enough for me to mention the works of celebrities like Porpora, Leonardo Vinci, Leonardo Leo, Francesco Feo and Pergolese. Look at these operas and tell me if you find those interruptions caused by the development of the bass in their recitatives? Take into consideration those written by those profound masters such as Giovanni Haffe, Baldassarre Galuppi (alias Buranello) Nicolo Jommella, Gaetano Latilla, Pasquale Cafaro, Davide Perez, Gennaro Manna, Tommaso Trajetta, Nicolo Piccinni, Antonio Sacchini, Reichart, Giovanni Cristiano, Bach, Antonio Mazzoni from Bologna, Pietro Guglielmo, Amadea Nauman Misiweozek, Pasquale Anfossi, Giovanni Pajesiello, Carlo Monza, Tozzi, Borroni, Bertoni, Giambattista Borghi, Tommaso Giordano, Floriano Gasmann, who died lately, who besides his important services rendered to the court of Ceasar, left us many operas and good pupils; among them is Antonio Salieri, who is a virtuoso chamber singer at the Imperial Court. Let us review the operas of Giuseppe Bonno,\* successor of Gosmann to the

\*The noble Madame Marianna Martinez of Vienna, speaks of Giuseppe Bonno with the most superlative praise. This incomparable lady, endowed with superior genius for music, received the elements and training from Sig. Bonno. Her progress was so rapid that it awakened the admiration of all the distinguished professors of music. Her compositions were in great demand in Naples, Bologna and in many of the famous Italian cities. I heard her myself, when she was still in her teens, sing and play her own compositions on the cembalo with such surprising mastery and expression, that she inspired Abbot Metastasio to write many of

Imperial Court. His name is well known to the musical public. Let us also investigate the works of Chev. Cristoforo Glück, who was also in the service of the Imperial Court. His creative genius enabled him to not only discover and master the hidden depths of arcanus and lights of philosophy and science, but he unearthed from the bosom of immensity, that which is most rare and interesting in music, especially in French music, of which he was the reformer and autocrat. How can I praise so much merit? What can my feeble voice add to his glory! Not only in his own country, but in every land of Europe, his name is held in reverence as a protector of music. What more can be said about him than this: Orfeo, Ifegenia, Alceste, Paride and Elena received praise from the whole French nation? France, who is so jealous of the glories of her sons, and a strict and severe judge of the glories of foreigners, raised a monument to him in the middle of the XVIII century!\* How can we justly accuse the

his beautiful poems. Consequently the celebrated Father Martini, at unanimity of votes, honored himself by naming her a member of our Filarmonici Accademici of Bologna. Although only an amateur, she can justly be called a rare mistress and genius of music.

\*I will not mention many other very deserving ones so as not to wander too far from the path I intend to follow; besides they are all well known. In fact, who is there that does not know the worth of a Wagenfeil, who died at the Imperial Court on the first day of March in the year MDCCLXXVI? Of Giuseppe Steffan, also of the Imperial service, who without a doubt is the first player of Gravi-cembalo of Europe?

composers for the decline of the recitative? It is the modern artists who spoil and ruin the recitatives, because they do not wish to take the trouble to learn the rules of perfect declamation. I have no desire to mention here their defects in recitative, because Pier-Francesco Tosi mentions them so plainly in his treatises on page 43. I shall only repeat what he says: "We hear numerous and unbearable defects in the recitatives, which are unnoticed by those who commit them. . . . . There are those who sing the recitative of the theatre, like that of the church or chamber. Their chanting 'Cantilena' is depressing. Others, who try to be interesting, exaggerate. Others recite them to themselves. Some mumble, while others push the last syllable. Some do not sound them at all, while others sing them carelessly and absent mindedly. Others do not understand it, and others who do, do not make it comprehensible. Some implore in it, others sing it with disdain. Some sing it with closed teeth, and others with affectation. Some do not pronounce well, and others squeeze it. Some laugh it and another cries it. Some speak it, while others whistle it. Some yell it and others scream it. Others sing it out of pitch!"

Besides these errors, which take one away from the natural interpretation, a greater one is committed—that of not studying recitatives correctly. To tell the truth, I really cannot understand why singers of both sexes hate so much the study of this part of the theatrical art! They well know by their own

and others' experience, that a recitative well rendered brings praise, success and profitable engagements. Be witness to this: Nicola Grimaldi, alias Cavalier Niccolino, possessed the art of recitative and acting to such perfection that although he was very poor in other talents and did not have a beautiful voice, he became very singular. The same is true of Madame Merighi. Why did Maria Benti Burgarelli, alias La Romanina, become so famous? Because she was a very correct actress. She was so perfect in her comedy that she inspired the sublime Metastasio to write "Didone" for her. Cortona, Barone Ballerini, Paita, Tesi and Monticelli became illustrious because of their good acting; and many others, the names of whom would make this chapter too long.

One must confess that a well delivered recitative accompanied by correct action, gives as much pleasure and delight as a cantabile. We have a clear proof of this when we read what Tartini says about "Recitativo Semplice." "During the fourteenth year of the past century a drama was given in Ancona, in which there was a line of recitative in the beginning of Act III, which had no other accompaniment than the simple bass. This harmoniously developed recitative was so powerful that its effect was not only noticeable on the faces of us of the profession, but upon the whole audience as well. This recitative was not designed to cause tears, for I well remember that the words were of hatred

and sarcasm, but of such rigidity as to move the heart! The drama was given thirteen times and always with the same effect. This effect was emphasized by the silence and expectancy of the audience, who were preparing themselves to enjoy it." Another great proof was evinced for many years by Gaetano Casali, alias Cavadenti. He was in Venice, at the head of a stock company, and as the success of the comedy was not enough to enable him to cover his expenses, he conceived the idea of giving Metastasio's great dramas. He distributed the roles and taught them to his actors, and then waited for an opportunity to produce them. It happened, that the opera "Artaserse," taken from Metastasio's drama, was given unsuccessfully at the theatre of Saint Giangrisotomo. Casali announced that on the following evening his company would present the same "Artaserse" as a drama. An immense crowd attended the performance, more out of curiosity than for any other reason, but the public was overcome and won. Those actors so perfectly characterized by words and action the personages represented, that they won universal praise, and were compelled to reproduce the play many times. Casali was so encouraged by this success that he continued giving these dramas for many years, and all were a success, principally because of the acting. The profit and glory were so great that Casali wrote a letter of thanks to Metastasio, who contributed so much to his welfare and fortune.

From all this we can readily see the advantages to be derived from well studied action.

The principal feature to be enjoyed in dramas written purposely to be set to music, and accompanied by instruments, is the singing. Yet, when these dramas are given without the singing parts and accompaniments, and with perfect action only, they are interesting enough to satisfy the most artistic taste. Why is it that Opera Buffa and Ballet, which at one time were given only as accessories to acts of serious operas, have succeeded in standing by themselves? Through perfect acting! Comedians and dancers are really the only ones to-day, who, with their "Pantomima," appreciate and treat the true merits of good action, and are consequently the only ones who obtain successful results and deserve praise and credit! I hope these examples that I have given will make it plain that to be a perfect artist, it is not enough to sing well, but one must also master the art of acting.

It now remains for me to tell you my opinion about the way to say a recitative and how to act it. I must state first, that we have two kinds of recitatives; one is "Semplice" and the other is "Instrumentato."

"Semplice" (simple) is the one that is accompanied only by the bass. This recitative was invented by Giacomo Peri, about the year 1600, in order that the dialogue would not languish too much. It was placed between arias, duets and choruses. If such recitatives are written by an intelligent master, they result



natural, because of the simplicity in which they are composed. They are not only situated in the natural chord of each voice, but they are marked and divided in such a way as to perfectly imitate a natural speech. Thus, one can distinguish each period and can follow the interrogatives, declarative points and all the parts of speech. All these shades are expressed with that kind of "Cantilena" which varies according to the different inflections of the voice, and the diversity of tone, and the feelings to be expressed.

The other style of recitative is called "Instrumentato" (with orchestration), because it requires an orchestral accompaniment. The accompaniment fills in those bars in which the singer has only action and the music follows him to give brilliancy and life to all that he says and does. It is also customary for the voice and orchestra to perform in perfect time, in order to not interrupt the feeling and expression. This style of recitative was invented to emphasize some important scene that ends in a mood of deep feeling, as agitation, fury, tenderness or pathos.

When such recitatives are well written and rendered, they are always well received and are often the support and success of the whole opera. The "Cantilena" style (chanting) of both these recitatives, although sung always in perfect pitch, must be loosened and natural as a declamation or a recitation. It would be very improper for a singer to render it in "Messa di Voce" style, or to use "Portamento" in it.

Instead, he should say it plainly and naturally and distinguish its different moods only by slight inflection of the voice, by giving and taking back the accent or by making the voice sweeter as any cultured man does when he speaks or reads. It is fitting for me to say here, that the merits of the recitative consist in knowing how to well place the "Appoggiatura," or what we may better call the musical accent.

This precious accent which is of most importance in a recitative consists in taking a note higher than it is written, and this is singularly practiced in those occasions in which some syllables of the same word are found upon notes of the same kind as better shown in Figure 31.

**FIGURE 31**

I will explain what these two accents are: One is to retain the voice, as in "Oh, Lord!" and the other is loose, according to the idea it expresses. Now it is languid, and then bright. Now it is serious and then sustained. The teacher and pupil must know all these different accents and how to adapt them. I advise the pupil to undertake this study early and do it when he has the chance to be under the supervision of a good teacher, who can show him how to declaim them right from the beginning. I know that

at one time it was the opinion of the professors that the chamber recitative was said differently than that of the theatre. A difference was also established between parlor and church recitative. Although I have been thinking much about it, I have not been able to discover any reason for a different interpretation.

Recitatives whether sacred or secular, must be rendered in the same way, that is, with clear voice and naturally. Full value must be given to every word and each point and comma distinguished well in order to convey the exact sense and poetry to the public. If there is to be any difference, it will be relative to the amount of voice used, in proportion to the size of the place where one is singing. Although recitative should be said with modulations, points and commas, it will always be languid unless it is supported by convenient action. Action gives life, strength and value to speech. It clearly expresses the character represented, and it is action that makes a true actor. Tullio said that all the beauties and greatness of an actor, lie in action. "Actio, actio, actio!"

To say that action is a gift of Nature is a mistake. It is learned through study and art. I admit that one may receive by Nature a stronger inclination to become an actor than another, but an inclination for an art does not mean that one knows the art. It is necessary to study and polish it. It is often said (and it is a truth) that acting must be natural

and not studied, and above all not exaggerated (a defect noted in some artists). However, this does not justify one's not studying the art; instead it means, that one must learn to act without affectation, simply and naturally. One must learn to adapt action to the words and character of the part which he is to represent. Adaptation and uniformity are exactly what is meant by naturalness, and these are acquired through study. The things one may have received from Nature, are a good appearance and graceful movements of the arms and hands.

It is true that the study of action has no precise rules by which a student may learn the exact gesture for this or that occasion; but he will learn general rules and principles, of which there are many, and thus make a foundation upon which to build. The specific gestures which may be taught one for some particular role are always practical and dictated by sane and mature judgment, or copied from actors of renown, by observing them in those special roles we are learning.

The first thing of importance is to learn to walk gracefully and naturally on and off the stage. The best place to learn this is at a dancing school. Dancing teaches one to move the feet and to carry the arms gracefully, and to turn the head with ease and move the whole body with elasticity and grace. Fencing and horse back riding are also very good, especially in those cases where the actor has to perform these actions. They also make one's body strong and robust.

It is very essential to be able to show any emotion and mood at will with the face, "the work of the mask." One must have ease in changing from a sweet expression to a harsh one, from tenderness to madness, from affection to disdain, etc. This is the most beautiful part of the art that an actor can possess. The important thing is, that these changes of expression must succeed each other with naturalness and at the exact moment. It would be unpardonable if an actor was given the part to listen to a story of misfortune or joy and he should remain indifferent throughout the story, and wait until the end and then suddenly show sorrow or joy! Such signs of expression must be manifested little by little, starting from the moment that the facts begin to appear clearly to him and advancing as the pain or joy develops in the story. It is necessary for the actor's mind to be concentrated when he speaks as well as when he listens. If he is absent minded when talking, he not only forgets the action, but the melody as well. Such a mistake not only offends the ear of his public, but puts his companion, who may be following him, off the pitch. If an actor does not look at the one who is talking to him, he cannot execute the counteraction, nor give relief to the emotions awakened by the speech to which he is listening. In spite of this fact, we see actors who, instead of thinking about what they are saying, or to what they are listening, allow themselves to look around on the stage or to the boxes

and talk to friends! All such things are strictly against duty and harmful to the performance.

To act perfectly, one must know one's words and music by heart. If he thinks he can sing, trusting himself merely to the leader of the orchestra and to the prompter, it will be impossible for him to accompany them with correct action, for he will be unable to grasp words, music and action at once. Furthermore, one must see that the action is suited to the words said, and in order to be able to represent the particular character, he must know the exact meaning of each word, otherwise he will commit errors which will cause chagrin. This science is truly more difficult than one might believe, but nevertheless we have positive general rules. These general rules are dictated by the teachers. The details are learned through practice and by observing good actors, and by consulting experts in special cases. Such experts can be found in every city of culture and such cities are many, especially in our Italy, where we have knights, gentlemen, literary men, and plebians, who as amateurs, recite dramas, and are good actors and are willing to help those who ask; such as the Marquis Teodoli of Rome, the Marquis of Liveri, and Giuseppe Santoro (lawyer) of Naples, and many others who help make the student perfect, and our Metastasio now in Vienna. How excellent his art is, is shown by Signora Teresa Reuter and Angelo Maria Monticelli who became perfect by following his instruction.

In conclusion, if an actor is deficient in his acting, he alone is guilty. He cannot hide under the excuse that he has no opportunity to acquire it.

## CHAPTER XV

### ORDER, RULES AND GENERAL BEHAVIOR TO BE OBSERVED BY AN EARNEST STUDENT WHILE LEARNING THE ART OF SINGING

**I** was much inclined to close this little treatise with a collection of chosen solfeggios, written by the most distinguished professors, and by so doing, give food for thought and enjoyment to the young students. But in thinking of the many worthy masters still teaching to-day, and especially of the excellent collections left us by our valiant ancients, I concluded it quite unnecessary. Indeed, what could one add to those musical treasures, left us by Leonardo Leo, Nicolo Porpora and our Giovanni Haffe and many others to whom our vocal teachers may apply for their schools. Let it be known also, that in the melodic inspirations of these solfeggios, one can find a choice and varied style and a good taste of motives suitable to any voice and temperament. In this way the student is given the opportunity to accustom his ear to the "Cantilena of basso magistrale." This aids and supports the voice, and this result cannot be obtained when a "cantilena" of the bass resembles



that of the "calascione." Some may object to these solfeggios on the plea that "They are out of fashion. They sing differently to-day." Such ideas are wrong, for the fundamental principles cannot be changed. These solfeggios are very useful to the profession, not only because they are written by distinguished professors, but also because they were written during the period when the principle of singing was founded on precision and great respect for the rules of art. To prove the truth of this, it is enough to say that by these solfeggios, the aid of art, and the wisdom and ingenuity of great masters, those valiant men and women were brought out, whom I mentioned in Chapter II of this book.

I was a pupil of Leonardo Leo for two years, and was then at the tender age of fourteen years. This great man wrote a new solfeggio for each pupil every third day, but he was very careful in writing one suitable to the age and talent of each. Among these students, there were some who were older than I, and consequently more advanced and with stronger chests. Therefore, the master wrote more difficult solfeggios for them than for me. I was very anxious to have the same exercises as the advanced students, and one day, when he presented a new solfeggio to me, I saw that it was not very different from the others I had had, so I dared to say: "I think I can sing the exercises that the other students sing, even though they are older than I." The good master, who had already sized up my ability

and strength, and wishing to give me a "good lesson in conceit," granted me my desire. I started on my new solfeggio very earnestly, and in the beginning all was coming rather easy, but finally it happened to me, as to a child who undertakes a run without first figuring upon the strength of his legs and then falls exhausted upon the floor. I did not have strength nor sufficient art to graduate, sustain and direct my voice, and I had to give up the exercise. Then the master smilingly said to me, "I admire and praise your desire, but I cannot encourage you to do this way, because it would disturb the good order of your training and that would harm you. So, continue in your graded method, and study patiently and in a short time you will reach your companions and gain the same glory." This beautiful example is good for teachers as well as students. Composers might also learn it, so that they will write solfeggios well graded and in proportion to the age and strength of their pupils. Pupils should be careful and select those which they can perform with ease, and thus each voice will be directed in its own way. When a tree is young, it is easy to curb and any hand can curb it; but when it has matured it will break if one attempts to bend it. So with the voice. If teachers do not succeed in accomplishing the perfection of this part of vocal instruction when their students are young, they cannot be sure of doing it later, because Nature is not so pliable, and the students' minds less willing to obey.

When the student has mastered the Cadenza, then he must be started to learn recitative. He must not only learn to divide the syllables beneath each note, but he must also learn to insure intonation, so as to completely master the loosened and melodic way of singing in the declamatory style of the recitative. I do not advise teachers to avail themselves of theatrical recitatives unless they are those written by a master hand. For this reason one must have in his collection, those of the "cantate" of Alessandro Scarlatti, Chev. D'Astorga Bononcini, Gasperini, Bendetto Marcello, and Nicolo Porpora, etc., etc. Twelve of the latter have been printed which are really worthy of so great a master. It has been said in my preceding chapter, that the recitative has its own style of cantilena which does not admit of any change because it cannot and ought not to pass the limits of its natural declamations. The above mentioned teachers have written the recitative splendidly and scientifically. Even though the student is young, he can master this kind of declamation and appear on the stage. The studying of madrigals is more than a necessity for young students, because these insure intonation, and accustom the chest to stand the work and they also refine the ear in well-mastered rhythm.

The study of duets is not only good for intonation but it serves to master expression and finally teaches one to so graduate the voice that it will blend per-

fectly with the one singing with him. There are many madrigals and duets written by valiant masters which are known to the whole profession. The only difficulty is to have them appreciated by the teachers of to-day, then they would be admitted and be of great advantage to the profession if practiced by the required rules.

When the schools were teaching in good order, the graded study was most observed and since every student gradually passed through all the rules of art, the result was that each voice was perfectly sure in every kind of singing. The illustrious Father Martini has given to the press of late a collection of duets, dedicated to her Royal Highness, the "Widow Elect of Saxonia." For expression, grace, noble and perfect singing, and for difficulty, they are by common consent written by a master hand.

If the teachers who are the directors of this art, are not going to guide the students by graded and positive rules, their success will be incomplete. We should keep in mind the customs of our predecessors in this art and faithfully follow their steps. Domenico Egizio practiced the art of singing to perfection and was a noted instructor. Among his pupils who have won renown, Giovacchino Conti, afterwards called Gizziello, must be mentioned. We cannot describe the loving attention of his teacher in instructing him, nor the faithful devotion of the pupil in his earnestness to obey his teacher's every suggestion. Both

kept perfectly together until he reached perfection. An incident separated them. Gizziello was called to Vienna by order of the Imperial Court, but this did not keep him from studying to perfect the rules given him and to put into practice the good advice received. Later he went to England for a few years, where he perfected his style and made himself a rare singer. Although he had great reputation as a singer, he was not satisfied with himself and upon his return to Italy, he stopped some time in Bologna to study with Bernacchi. This example should appeal to many conceited ones. Giuseppe Appiani, alias Appianino, went also to Bologna to study with Bernacchi. These two studied with Bernacchi when both were recognized among the number of the best singers of Europe.

I would not wish any light-headed student to think that he could abandon the supervision of his teacher, nor that he was endowed with the talent of these two professors. Let him beware of such a mistake. The gifts of Gizziello and Appiani were not only rare, but they possessed many beautiful virtues outside of singing, which gave them distinction even among professors of renown.

Young students: I fear that you do not possess that stimulating sparkle, that desire and determination to unite to your talents given you by your Creator, modesty, humility and general behavior which so becomes a real artist.

I observe that women, owing to their sex, aban-

don study when young and deem it worthless, because they receive praise for their talent. Thus, few reach a high standard in art. Other youths suffer from similar mistakes, because their teachers expose them too soon in the theatre, and the praise received deceives both student and teacher. Would that the student could but realize that the applause was given him more as an encouragement for further study than for his present ability, and would that the teacher looked more deeply into his welfare, so he would not expose the pupil to the public until he is perfect! What perfection can be expected from a youth of sixteen or seventeen years? He may show good quality of voice and an artistic disposition, but the rest remains to be worked out through effort and study. How many promising youths have been stranded like ships near to a harbor and instead of getting into port, landed on a sandy bank? Such disorders result when a youth abandons study, thinking he is all sufficient because he has a natural, pleasing voice, a graceful portamento, winning ways and a pleasing appearance. If such a one and others would go back to their teachers, when their engagements end, and take up their study again, they might then hope to reach perfection in art! Alas, the dominating conceit in our profession is like the germ of consumption which blinds one, so we see things differently from what they are.

Earnestness in study, good will, true and sincere

love for hardships and christianity are the necessary requisites to make a professor distinguished and honored throughout the world.

Vienna, Austria,  
May 3d, 1777.